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## BOARDING SCHOOL EDUCATION

W. H. BURSTON

THE intrinsic merits and demerits of boarding school education are rarely discussed in England, for the question is inextricably bound up in the public mind with the public school. As a result, discussions about boarding schools tend to be preoccupied with the problems of free and fee-paying schools, independent or state control, class basis, privilege and commercial advantage and so on, and the special advantages and disadvantages of the boarding school are obscured amid a mass of issues only connected with it by historical accident. My object in this article is not to decide whether boarding schools are better than day schools, but to try to elucidate the questions which are involved in this issue, and these questions are ultimately problems of educational philosophy. As a preliminary to this, I shall first indicate briefly what are the essential features of boarding school education which mark it off clearly from its alternatives.

### 1

The most obvious characteristic of the boarding school is that its members live a communal life together, and this indeed, is an advantage commonly claimed for the boarding school. It is a community of boys living together with comparatively little adult supervision or society. Unlike the day-boy, the boarder spends his whole life among boys of more or less his own age, learns to understand various types and characters, and gets to know other boys really well. Thus Mr J. F. Wolfenden writes: 'He has those same youngsters . . . with him in dormitories and studies and playrooms all through the twenty-four hours. He has a very large collection of approximate contemporaries all around him in all the activities of his waking life.'<sup>1</sup> Thus, much boy society and little adult society can be noted as the essential feature of the boarding school community.

Now, any community requires a minimum of order and regulation to ensure reasonable liberty for each of its members. A community of boys requires, further, regulations to ensure their health and safety — rules, for instance, forbidding bathing in a dangerous river. Finally, in an educative community we may expect to find rules not merely for liberty and safety, but to ensure that the purposes of the community can be fulfilled. Examples of this latter are rules with a specific moral basis, or, perhaps, more general adjurations requiring each boy to take some athletic exercise each day, and to spend a

<sup>1</sup> J. F. WOLFENDEN: *The Public Schools Today* p. 62.

certain period in academic preparation. All three kinds of regulation are to be found in all boarding schools.

If we consider these three kinds of regulation it is clear that whereas the first springs from the existence of any community, the last two derive from the fact that the community is an irresponsible one which, if left to itself, might endanger the lives of its members, or fail to be educative. This leads us to the second principle of boarding school education — the school must accept responsibility for the safety and well-being of its pupils, and it cannot leave them to do as they like. Thus, any boarding school has to reconcile its belief in a community of boys with its responsibility for exercising adequate adult supervision.

Several consequences follow from this. The need for order and regulation means that a boy's out of class life is subject to a 'rule of law' — that is, to general rules stating what he may or may not do, and which it is his duty to apply to particular cases. Situations which, in the day-boy's family life, are met by individual guidance and supervision by the parent, are all problems for the boarder — problems of deciding for himself whether, and in what ways the general rules apply. He is subject to the same kind of government out of class as in class. Though punishment may follow the breaking of rules, and provide an incentive for keeping them, it does not do away with the responsibility thrust on the boarder, since he is not constantly reminded, warned and advised when each new situation crops up.

A second consequence is that there is an emphasis on communal rather than individual recreation. In every boarding school team-games flourish, and not only team-games but other kinds of communal recreation such as choirs, orchestras, amateur dramatic or operatic productions. These and other activities take place at fixed times, and a very large part of a boarder's day is necessarily run to a time-table. This regular routine is often claimed as an advantage of the boarding school — whether this is so or not, it is certainly necessary for the school to know, at most times, where its boys are, and how they are occupied, otherwise it is neglecting its duty of standing *in loco parentis*. Though the boarder may have a choice of activities, it is a limited choice, and the times at which he has choice are fixed: it is clear that a boy with little taste for communal recreations is unlikely to be happy at a boarding school. Of course, these recreations bring considerable educational benefits. For the moment, I am not concerned with this, but with the fact that whether they are good or not they are a logical consequence of boarding school education — it could not exist unless the emphasis was on such group recreations, for only by such means can the school combine its belief in little adult society with its duty of exercising adequate



adult supervision. It is the application of the principle of class teaching to non-academic activities. Just as, in a class, twenty or thirty boys learn the same thing at the same time and at roughly the same pace, so, in team-games, they do the same thing at the same time and with much the same skill. The analogy is extended still further when Rugby football is organized in divisions corresponding to the playing abilities of the boys — here we get the same demand for a reasonably homogeneous group that prompts the divisions of classes into A, B, and C streams.

A third consequence which should be mentioned is that a boarding school normally entrusts a good deal of the administration of its rules to prefects. Here again the point is not the intrinsic merits of the prefect system, but the fact that it is one of the logical consequences of a community of boys where adult supervision is reduced to a minimum. If there were no prefects, many more masters would be needed, and the community would be less truly a community of boys than it is intended to be. In this respect it is more than the mere application of the principle of class-teaching to non-academic activities. The nearest counterpart to the prefect system in the classroom is, I suppose, the Lancaster and Bell monitorial system which assumed that older boys could teach younger ones, just as the boarding school assumes they can govern the younger. Both systems made possible an economy of masters, but it is interesting to notice that the monitorial system has also been justified on its own merits. Bentham thought it an educational principle of some importance, and James Mill believed in it sufficiently to adopt it for the education of his own children.

The first effect of communal life on the pupil has already been mentioned: it makes him a good mixer, and it is a training in social behaviour and in tolerance of other people. It also makes him 'group conscious', for he gets little privacy during term time, and is always in and with his group. It is a training in thinking of the group — primarily of the house — as distinct from the individuals who compose it.

The 'rule of law', however, produces a third effect, no less important, and perhaps the most distinctive mark of the ex-boarder — it gives a boy considerable self-reliance, for it is the boy's responsibility so to conduct his life that he does not conflict with the government. This quality is also fostered in other ways. The housemaster, matron, and medical staff are all available when required, but, to a large extent, it rests with the boy to ask for their assistance. All this works to the same end — the boy learns to look after himself in every way far more than the day boy whose parents do much of his thinking for him.

So far, we have been discussing communal living and its conse-

quences. There is one other special characteristic of the boarding school and that is the fact that the school controls both the academic and the out of class life of its pupils, and a maximum co-ordination between the two can be achieved. The housemaster can see that a boy has not too many hobbies, that he does not overwork, and so on. The knowledge gained from supervising non-academic activities leads to increased wisdom in dealing with the boys in the class-room. Temporary falling-off in work may be due to slight causes which can be explained by a casual word from the housemaster to the teacher. The day-boy's parents, even when they realize such reasons, will rarely think they justify a special note of explanation. Thus we find the rather paradoxical situation that though the boarding school extends rules and organization to a boy's leisure time, yet there may well be greater understanding of individual circumstances, and a less harsh and unyielding government in class.

The essence of the matter is that a boarding school is not only communal living — it is a planned education, for a single authority controls the whole life of the boy during term-time, and therefore the whole environment can become a co-ordinated educative agency. Games, exercise, academic work, aesthetic experience — all can play their part in due proportion and at the appropriate time in the week's programme. A boarding school is essentially the use of a specially conditioned artificial environment to educate a boy's mind, body and character. A day school may hold the same wide view of its functions but it controls only part of the boy's environment, and co-operates more or less successfully with an independent agency — the family.

This is a brief but, I hope, an adequate account of the essential characteristics of the boarding school and of the main advantages which it can offer. Everything derives from two basic points — communal living, and the planning of the whole environment of the boy for educational purposes. I now propose to inquire what are the assumptions on which these two concepts rest, and what more general ideas in educational philosophy they imply.

## 2

There are two preliminary points to notice. The first is that all educational theory is necessarily concerned with two broad classes of problems. There are, first, problems of the nature of the pupil — of the raw material with which the educator starts, and second, problems of the nature of the aim — of the kind of adult whom the educator wants to create. The first is a psychological problem, and the second, philosophical. Both kinds of problem are invariably involved in the theory and practice of education and it is most important, when examining the assumptions of a particular kind of educational practice, to distinguish the psychological assumptions

from the philosophical ones, and not to apply the methods appropriate to the one to the solution of the other. Thus in examining the two basic characteristics of boarding school education, we must ask (a) what do they assume about the nature of the pupil, and (b) what kind of educational ideal do they imply.

The second point to notice is that the idea of a planned education is a separate and distinct one from the idea of communal living. It is possible to conceive of boys living together in a hostel and receiving their academic education elsewhere and from different people. It is also possible for a boy's total environment to be planned for educational purposes without involving him in living in a community. The clearest example of a planned total environment for an individual boy is James Mill's education of John Stuart Mill, who, as is well known, was entirely educated at home by his father. The order in which he studied different subjects, the subjects he studied, and the methods of study were all controlled by one man. And the same man trained his son's character and supervised his leisure pursuits. Each day J. S. Mill took a long walk with his father, discussing academic problems on the way. His biographer, Alexander Bain, tells of the employment of an army drill sergeant to provide the boy with physical exercise. The companions with whom J. S. Mill mixed were few and carefully scrutinized — thus his whole environment was purged of non-educative influences. This is surely the most formidable education ever contrived.

Now, the major psychological idea involved in any kind of planned total education in this sense is a belief in the power of environment to affect the pupil. This is, of course, implied in a belief in education at all, and the idea of a planned total environment is but a logical extension of this. None the less, we can distinguish different degrees of this belief. We cannot believe that any education at all can be effective without believing in environment in general as a force capable of moulding human nature. But does it mould human beings whether they co-operate or not? If we thought that environment only affected individuals when it is consciously used for educational purposes, then there would be a reasonable case for the day school on the ground that the boy could spend part of his time in educating himself, and the rest in living. This would not rule out the case for the boarding school but it would make it rest on another basis, as we shall see. But such an argument is very difficult to sustain, for it is a matter of common experience that our environment does affect us, whether we like it or not. Thus, though a boy may go to school to learn, he will also learn much without the effort or the intention from his general environment. But there is a more extreme view — we may hold that the out of school environment is more powerful in its effect than the school. This provides the strongest

case for the planned environment, for it can hold that, unless the total environment is controlled, the unplanned part may exercise such an effect as to nullify the efforts of formal education. This view was held by the English Utilitarians, and it is significant that Helvétius, the French educationist to whom James Mill acknowledged his debt, favoured boarding schools.<sup>1</sup> Mill himself did not, but he saw that 'education' must be defined to include the total environment, and, as we have noticed, he illustrated this belief by his practice with J. S. Mill.

All this logically follows from the extreme environmentalist position. We may therefore say that the case for a planned education varies in direct proportion with our belief in the power of environment to change people. At one end of the scale we have the view that the out of school environment may be neutral — the case for a planned education then rests on the fact that there are unused educational resources which might be put to educative purposes — that is to say, it rests on the belief that we *ought* to harness all available resources for education — a philosophical assumption. But at the other end there is the view that the non-school environment will be a powerful and influential veto on school education, unless harnessed to it, and planned to the same end. This is a psychological assumption, and it would mean that we cannot have effective school education unless we plan the whole environment of the pupil for educational purposes.

Since the boarding school is not merely a planned total environment, but a group environment, we must now ask on what psychological basis the idea of communal living rests. It may or may not be a group life planned with an educational purpose, for it may be defended not because it produces good adults but because it satisfies the needs of adolescent boys. If so, it contains a philosophical assumption that it is right to satisfy the needs of boys, either because we have a duty to them other than that of education, or because this is the way to make them good adults. But in any case, group living involves the same psychological assumptions as class-teaching — group learning in the academic field. These are that the group has a common starting point, common reaction to the same stimuli or environment and a common pace of development. Unless these three assumptions hold, at any rate to a large extent, class-teaching is vitiated. The same is true of group living. The assumption must be that the desire for it, or at least the ability to endure it, is common to all boys. And their reaction to their environment must possess important common elements, otherwise the same environment would very soon fail to suit them all. When one contemplates boarding-school recreations these assumptions are very clear. Thus it is

<sup>1</sup> HELVÉTIUS: *De l'homme, de ses Facultés intellectuelles, et de son Education*, Section 10, Chapters II and III.

commonly argued either that all boys like games, or that they will grow to like them, i.e. that they will all react in a certain way to their environment. When an occasional exception or 'misfit' is discovered, recourse is had to the concept of the 'normal boy'. When Thomas Arnold wrote: 'Till a man learns that the first, second and third duty of a schoolmaster is to get rid of unpromising subjects, a great public school will never be what it might be, and what it ought to be,' he was merely expressing a perfectly logical demand for 'normal boys'. Just as effective class teaching is prevented if the abilities of the members of the class vary too widely, so is a boarding school inhibited in its work if its pupils vary too much in character and temperament.

All such ideas of group education stand in direct contrast to individual methods, such as private tutoring, the Dalton system, personal apprenticeship in learning a trade, individual tutorials in university work, rather than lectures and seminars, and so on. And in the sphere of character training, the boarding school is a group technique, while family upbringing is an individual one. Whatever efforts the boarding school may make to cater for individual differences of temperament, there is no escaping the fact that it can't really do much in this direction, and certainly nothing like so much as the family. A boarding school cannot say: 'This boy has such and such a temperament and will probably react favourably to this particular environment — these are his particular needs.' It must generalize and say: 'Boys of this age like so and so, and will react as follows to this environment — these are the needs of boys.' Though this can be modified, and frequently is, it must remain the ineluctable psychological premise of boarding school education.<sup>1</sup> It must, of course, be remembered that this, like most questions, is a question of degree. A boarder retains some family life during vacations, and more, if he is a weekly boarder. A day-boy gets some communal life at school. It is not a question of any communal life or none, but of how much. In so far as communal life at all is advocated, there must be assumptions about boys in general, and their reaction to a common environment. And a boarding school means that the boy's whole life during term is a communal life.

Now, since a boarding school is both a planned total environment, and a group technique, it rests on the psychological premises of both ideas. And a belief in the power of environment together with the need for a homogeneous group means that the boarding school

<sup>1</sup> I cannot speak from experience of 'progressive' boarding schools, which would, of course, claim to allow much more freedom. But I suspect that, even there, there are general assumptions, though different ones from those of the public school, about the needs of boys, and that a kind of orthodoxy of the unorthodox is fostered.



really postulates a pre-school upbringing with certain common elements. Some of these elements are fairly obvious — a boarder must be accustomed by his family to the idea of living away from home, and to standing on his own feet. It is helpful if he is encouraged to take part in group recreations, both because they will form a large part of his recreations at boarding school, and because constant association with a group will tend to develop group characteristics in the individual boy. Others are not so obvious, but it is clear that they are presumed to be there by the boarding school, and that means that the early family upbringing must very largely be responsible for putting them there.

This assumption of a common type of family upbringing seems to me the element of truth in the assertion of some writers that the public school rests on a class basis — that it would not succeed unless all the pupils came from the same social class. The fallacy in this argument is not the insistence on a common upbringing, but the view that social class is the main environmental force and real determinant of the character of the family upbringing. Such views rest on very dubious grounds for there can be good and bad family education in all classes and there is no logical or necessary connection between economic and social class and the kind of upbringing postulated by the boarding school. The important thing is to recognize this postulate and its implications: not every boy *will* be suitable for boarding school whatever his family training, but, if the belief in the power of environment is valid, every boy *could* be suitable for boarding school education, granted the appropriate pre-school upbringing, and this depends on other factors than social and economic ones. Indeed, the one economic circumstance which seems automatically to favour the appropriate upbringing is that both parents should be heavily occupied in earning their living: in such conditions the child would tend to be self-reliant, and to seek companionship with other boys.

There is however, one economic factor which, though not intrinsically connected with the boarding school, is at present connected with it, and works for its success. That is the fact that nearly all boarders pay high fees for the privilege. One of the features of the boarding school is, as we have noted, that the whole of the environment is geared to education, and that means that the boarder must be prepared to dedicate a larger part of his life to education than the day-boy. It can hardly be doubted that, if parents make heavy financial sacrifice for education (the extent of the sacrifice is, of course, the proportion of fees to parent's income) then the boy is conditioned to regard it as valuable and worthwhile, even if not attractive. Thus, though fee-paying and boarding school education are only accidentally linked today, the psychological effect of fee-paying is to produce

one of the essential conditions on which successful boarding school education rests. But it is certainly not the only way in which that condition could be produced.

## 3

We must now turn to the philosophical assumptions of the boarding school, and consider first the concept of a planned total environment, irrespective of whether it is a communal environment or not. Some of the ideas involved in this are common to any kind of education. All education implies a central purpose, for instance, because if we say we should cultivate such abilities as we have, and strive to increase our knowledge, we mean that intelligence and knowledge are constituents, though not the only ones, of the good individual. In this sense, every parent who decides that his son *ought* to have academic education, and every youth or adult who decides that he *ought* to extend his knowledge is implying a moral purpose. Such parents or adults are planners in so far as they arrange that the rest of the environment should make academic education possible. This kind of general philosophical aim does not, however, distinguish the idea of a planned total environment from other forms of education.

The kind of aims which do imply a planned total environment have been well expressed by Mr Donald Hughes. He writes: 'We have agreed that we are aiming at producing by our system of education Christians, who recognize an ultimate pattern and are seeking to live their lives in accordance with a recognized ethos. Now that ethos is not the ethos of general society. We hope that it will be, as a result of our educational process, but we must recognize that the values which we have embraced are not the values which our community as a whole accepts. I believe, therefore, that our system must be able to claim, as far as possible, the undivided attention of the boy; the voice of a sub-Christian society must not be allowed to keep breaking in on him . . . We have to face the fact that most homes in the country are not positively Christian. If we are trying to teach Christian truth as the final authority is it fair to the boy that he should every day have to go through the struggle of divided loyalties by being reminded that his parents have rejected this very authority? . . . Are we still clinging to the idea that information on a variety of topics as a substitute for a unified approach to Truth is an adequate preparation for life in a Christian democracy?'

These extracts contain two general ideas, both of which favour the technique of a planned total environment. There is, first, the idea of training a boy for something different from existing society, and therefore of sheltering him from existing society. Second, there is the suggestion that a 'unified approach to Truth' is needed, and this

<sup>1</sup> D. HUGHES: *The Public Schools and the Future*, pp. 49-50.



means, presumably, continuous co-ordination of intellectual and moral training at all stages. And, there is implied, but not stated, the idea that both intellectual and moral education should be in the charge of an expert. For, if we are to educate for an ideal Christian society, the educator must clearly be someone who has a clear vision of the ideal and a sound understanding of its implications in education. The first two of these ideas are separate and distinct: we can educate for an ideal society but it need not be a Christian one. But either ideal does imply that the educator should be an expert.

Now, if we hold that the ultimate purpose in education *determines* the content of both intellectual and moral education then there is a clear case for planning to ensure that all education is consistent with the purpose, and indeed to ensure that it is an *inference* from the purpose. So that the idea of a planned education is especially congenial to those who hold some such idea as this. Some who write from the Christian angle certainly imply that both our moral beliefs and our knowledge rest on presuppositions which are either Christian or something equally specific: thus moral and intellectual truth are both inferences from Christian theology, or some comparable metaphysic. And it is not therefore surprising that some Christians hold that a satisfactory Christian education can only be given in a boarding school.

Much the same is true if we hold that one side of education derives from the other. James Mill sometimes seems to argue in this way in his essay on education. For he says that intelligence and knowledge should be cultivated not as goods in themselves but because they enable us more effectively to promote the greatest happiness of the greatest number of people. This would mean, taken literally, that we only acquired that knowledge and ability which assisted in the practical work of promoting the general happiness. Mill certainly did not practise this in his education of his son, and he would, I think, have denied this implication: it only arises because he is anxious to fit intelligence and knowledge, which he recognizes as good, into his exclusive general aim of happiness.<sup>1</sup>

It is clear that only extreme versions of theories of this kind would logically justify a planned education on this ground alone. Such views would, I think, be challenged by most philosophers. A more generally acceptable view would be that moral and intellectual truth are not inferences from a metaphysical theory, rather that any theology or metaphysics must, amongst other things, fit the facts of moral and intellectual experience. Moral experience and knowledge

<sup>1</sup> An extreme and much less defensible view, resting on the same general assumption, is that implied in the educational policy of totalitarian states where moral and intellectual education are purged of all elements inconsistent with an exclusive loyalty to the state.

of the material world are the starting point, not the end, of any theory which seeks to explain them both. This would mean, in education, that the pupil might come by different ways to moral and intellectual truth: the important thing would be that he did arrive at the truth in these two spheres before trying to go further. And his moral and intellectual education could therefore proceed at different paces, by different methods and by different agencies. The content of moral training and intellectual education arises from the nature of moral and intellectual truth, and not from some outside source from which they are deduced.

The second general idea was that we should educate for an ideal society, and therefore shelter our pupils from existing defective society. James Mill thought it wise to shelter his son from the corrupt influences of society for this reason. Now, most people concerned with young children feel it right to shelter them from parts of existing society on the grounds that it might corrupt them, or that they might learn things which they should not learn until they are older. And, secondly, most people would hold that it is possible to educate people for an ideal society, by making them critical of existing society, but without planning their total environment. There is certainly an element of this in nearly all educational practice. The view that educating for an ideal society involves planning the total environment thus rests on special assumptions. These are, first, that only by controlling the whole environment can you form habits, and inculcate beliefs that will last — it is not sufficient to tell a boy what is good, or to encourage him to be critical, or to use part only of the environment to form values other than those of existing society. Second, is the assumption that the habits and values thus formed in adolescence will last.

These are psychological assumptions, and they can only be reconciled with the general psychological basis of a planned education — that environment can change the individual — if we also assume that environment exercises a particularly powerful influence during childhood and adolescence, and a relatively weak and ineffective one later. For it should be noted that the argument is that the same kind of environmental influence should be used to educate for our ideal society as will presumably be operating on people throughout their adult lives.

Although most educational thinking does naturally attach a special value to the formative years of childhood and adolescence, it does not usually go so far as this. For it is a difficult argument to sustain: any belief in environment does logically lead to a belief in the power of society to mould our characters, and to condition our moral beliefs, and to fertilize or stultify our intellectual ability. And since society operates for a much longer period and with consider-

able force on each of its members, we need to hold a particularly strong faith in the power of environment in the formative years if we are to believe that the habits then formed can resist the corrupting influence of society for the rest of our lives. On any showing it seems to me that the claim that a planned environment can educate for an ideal society rests more on hope than on fact. At its strongest, such a position implies that society is a function (in the mathematical sense) of education, and not the other way about. It also implies that whoever is responsible for the education has somehow emancipated himself from the corrupting influence which society is exerting on everyone else.

None the less, we must be careful not to overstate this view that society conditions our behaviour, whatever education does. It is clear that some education, such as that of a totalitarian state favours conformity to existing society, more than, for example, liberal education. And if we believe that it matters at all what kind of education we give our adolescents we must imply a special power to environment in the formative years. But that is not to say that the values inculcated in a specially planned education would differ radically from those of society. On the contrary, it would, I think, be true to say that the boarding school reflects the values of society — those which are generally accepted, if not always practised. There will always be much more truth than some educational theorists are inclined to admit in Plato's comment: 'There is not, and never has been, nor ever will be, a character produced by education whose virtue has prevailed and stood out against the instruction of the many.' Even if this is regarded as an extreme statement, the general principle would probably be conceded: on the whole educational reform has followed, not preceded social reform.

We cannot say that either of these ideas is a necessary philosophical assumption of the concept of a planned total environment: they must be regarded rather as examples of the kind of educational aim which favours this technique. But there is one general philosophical assumption necessarily involved in the idea of a planned total environment, and that is the idea that the whole of a boy's life, at whatever ages are subject to the planned environment, should be consecrated to equipping him for the future. How far this assumption is implied by any existing boarding school does of course depend on how far it defends its arrangements on the ground that they provide a planned educative environment: in so far as they do, this assumption is involved. And it is fundamentally a problem in ethics, for it is the idea of sacrificing the present for the future. We all recognize that this is sometimes necessary and good, but we also, I think, realize that there is a danger in such thinking — that of regarding a good in the future as of more value than an equivalent good in the present.

This kind of thinking is a standing temptation to the fervent advocates of political Utopias; it is also a fallacy to which educational thinkers will always be especially prone. For education as such is essentially the idea of conditioning or influencing a boy's present life for the sake of his future life as an adult. Since a boy is usually held to be less than fully responsible, there will always be good reason for saying that there is a special case for consecrating his present to the task of equipping him for the future. None the less, in our ordinary thinking, we do recognize that we have duties to the young, and they to us. And our duties are more than the duty of educating them, for we owe them also a duty as other human beings. Thus it is difficult to say that the *whole* environment should be educative, and nothing else, for that is satisfying only part of our duties. Of course, a boarding school would claim, I think rightly, that although its environment is planned as an educative one, within this framework it does acknowledge its duties to boys merely as other human beings. But it is a much more deliberately educative environment than the family, where education may be only incidental to the business of living. The question is one of finding the right balance between these two duties, and perhaps the opposition of some parents to boarding school education is at least partly based on the feeling that the boarding school gives too much weight to the duty of education: a feeling that, in morals as elsewhere, a bird in hand is worth two in the bush, and that it is unwise and unjustifiable to sacrifice too much of the present for the problematical future.

When we consider the special kind of planned total environment which the boarding school offers, we cannot fail to notice how exceedingly artificial it is. No boy, after leaving school, lives in a residential community for the rest of his life, unless he follows one or two exceptional vocations, such as the Army or Navy. He may have further residential education at a university: in the nineteenth century he usually did, and the boarding school could be defended as a direct preparation for further education of this kind. This is not so today, however, and the case for the boarding school must therefore depend on some theory of transfer — that is, the belief that the qualities created by one kind of environment will be valuable in an entirely different one. Any small personal community produces situations which evoke certain responses from the individual. Some of these responses are regarded as right responses: they are encouraged, and habits form. The assumption is that these same habits will be right, or at any rate useful, in other quite different situations. Our first task, therefore, is to consider what kind of situation and ethic the small personal community tends to produce.

The boarding school community imposes and develops a social ethic prescribing certain conduct by individuals towards other

individuals with whom they live, and are in constant personal association. This ethic is partly imposed by the school in the form of school rules, and partly by the boys themselves in the form of a code of what is or is not done among boys. These two are interdependent: that is to say, the school rules would be different if there were no code among the boys. For instance, school authorities can usually assume that an anti-social or unduly precocious boy will be corrected by other members of the house: so also will a boy who informs on another. Therefore there are normally neither rules nor punishments by the authorities on these occasions although, if the boy's code did not exist, the authorities would be compelled to intervene.

This may fairly be summarized, I think, by saying that the highest duty of a boy in a boarding school tends to be the welfare of the group to which he belongs. I do not mean that other duties are not pointed out to him, but I do mean that the situation in which he lives fosters the sense of duty towards a personal group much more than any other. And extreme intolerance is shown, particularly by other boys, to breaches of the code designed for this end. Even duty to other individuals in the group tends to become not a good in itself, but a duty which exists because the good name, and welfare of the group demands it. And other duties — the duty to make oneself good, or the duty to humanity at large, tend to be at a comparative discount.

The boarding school can be criticized therefore, on the ground that it involves a somewhat unbalanced moral education: it is however important not to overstate this criticism, for our duty to people whom we know will always form a large part of our duties, and, in any case, it is perhaps doubtful whether any other kind of duty — such as to an impersonal group like a nation, will ever be very real and tangible to a boy. The main thing is to realize that a system which makes morality largely a question of the personal group is not, by itself, a complete moral education. On the other hand, this system does provide occasions when boys, especially prefects, need considerable moral courage, and it is therefore true to say that, granted its psychological premise that there will be a common reaction to the boarding school situation, the boarding school does foster a sense of duty. It may be achieved largely by sanctions in the early stages, but it is none the less firmly and usually permanently implanted.

Moral education, however, is not merely a matter of doing the right thing — it is also a question of knowing what is the right thing to do. On this side of moral education, the boarding school has less to offer. For a boarder is conditioned by very powerful and continuous influences to having his standard of behaviour fixed for him.



He is not encouraged to be critical of the wisdom of school rules, still less of the code of behaviour enjoined by his comrades. These things he is expected to accept, with difficulty at first, perhaps but increasingly uncritically. And there is some evidence that this uncritical attitude towards accepted codes of conduct persists in later life. But this criticism must not be pushed too far. The moral standards of any boy living in a family are largely fixed for him. It would be generally agreed that the first stage of any moral education is to cultivate a sense of duty, and a second and later one, is a critical, though not necessarily adversely critical, attitude towards accepted social standards. If the second stage came too early, it might well have the effect of killing the sense of duty, and of giving the impression that not only are the accepted standards of society defective, but that all standards are an illusion. Despite all this, it is clear that the first stage — the cultivation of a sense of duty — must be done in such a way that it is a foundation for the second stage, and not an obstacle to the development of critical awareness of what really is right and good.

It is doubtful whether the boarding school community of boys is really satisfactory, from this point of view. It is largely the ethics of boys for boys. Furthermore, an implication of the group system of moral education is that it must fit the average boy, not the most intelligent, whose ideas of duty towards the group may be stultified if they differ from the accepted code. By comparison, a day-boy is in contact with the more experienced adult whose moral ideas will probably be more soundly based. He is in a position to get constant personal advice. So is the boarder, theoretically, but he is unlikely to ask for it, or to discuss moral problems save with other boys. And dominating all is the code of the group from which he cannot in term time escape. The day-boy, finally, is in contact with different moral codes, since he experiences that of his school, that enjoined on him by his family, and perhaps a third, that practised by his parents, which may or may not coincide with their precepts. There are certainly disadvantages if it does not, but assuming that parents practise what they preach, a day-boy's life can be a very good moral education. The effect of the contact with different moral ideas — the immature ones of his school group, and the mature ones of his family — is on the whole beneficial. There is generally enough in common between these two for the boy to gain a genuine sense of duty, and at the same time, there is sufficient contrast to stimulate him to think on these problems. And it is undoubtedly an advantage, perhaps a necessary condition, to reflection that a boy should at times be able to get out of his group, as a day-boy can, into his own home. Lastly, part of this moral atmosphere — that of the home — is that of adults engaged in the actual business of living and meeting

the situations and moral problems which arise from adult life in a modern society. Thus it is a direct introduction to adult life, and not, as the boarding school must be, based on some assumption of transferring qualities evoked by one situation, to another quite different one.

It is very difficult to decide how far this assumption is justified, but we can see some of the problems involved if, as a kind of test case, we inquire how far the boarding school can be regarded as a satisfactory preparation for democratic citizenship. Obviously, the experience of living under a 'rule of law' is an advantage here. Obviously, too, a boarder is admirably prepared for loyal membership of a small personal group, such as a corps, a ship, a firm and so on. And such group loyalty has at least one general quality — it makes a man in general less selfish and individualistic in outlook. Thus it produces the negative side of loyalty to any group, large or small.

But is the loyalty to the small group transformed into loyalty to the state? It is true that ex-public school boys have a fine record of public service. This is not conclusive evidence, however, for some writers on political theory would stress the fact that, at different times, the interests and attitudes of different groups within the community are thought to be those of the whole community, and what appears to be an attitude to the state is in fact only an attitude to a group within the state. Thus a high degree of patriotism is commonly a virtue of an army, but some countries could show examples of armies that have been more loyal to themselves than to the state, on occasion. There seems to me to be some truth in this argument. Nor is it the only argument on this point. Many psychologists would doubt whether the fostering of loyalty to a small group encourages civic loyalty. It may not be transferred: loyalty to small groups has frequently been inimical rather than contributory to larger loyalties. After all, if we argue that such transfer does occur, we are essentially assuming the possibility of retaining the negative side of the training — the restraint of an individual's self-regarding tendencies — while dropping the positive side — the identification of his other-regarding impulses with a personal group. None of these arguments proves that the boarder *could* not be a good citizen, but they do suggest that the transfer of loyalties from a small personal group to a large impersonal one is not automatic, and may be difficult, and this naturally raises the question of whether the boarding school is really the best preparation for citizenship. And there is a further point: the democratic citizen owes his state not only his loyalty but his judgment. Here also, the boarding school situation, as we have seen, may not produce all that could be desired in the future citizen, and in some respects at least, the day-boy has an advantage.



We may, then, sum up this discussion by saying that the pros and cons of boarding school education depend in the end on one psychological assumption, and two philosophical ones. On the psychological side there is the belief in the power of environment to change character. On the philosophical side it believes that the life of a boy should be, if not wholly, at any rate very largely consecrated to education, to preparation for adulthood, and, second, that character-training is an appropriate field for group methods of education. Thus it is not a question of boarding school education being right or wrong but of the case for it being stronger in proportion to the degree to which we think these assumptions hold. And we may believe in one much more strongly than the other two, and thus boarding school education has at times appealed to people of widely different general views. James Mill and Helvétius believed that environment could do nearly everything: they also believed that childhood had little value in itself and that it should be almost entirely devoted to preparation for adult life. So far a boarding school would have been congenial to their views. But Mill, unlike Helvétius believed strongly in individualism, and so the communal living idea made little appeal to him. He also thought small group loyalties would be antithetic to the general good, though this belief derives more from his observations of the contemporary political scene than from his philosophy. So Mill planned the total environment of one individual — his son — for educative purposes.

Later opinion in the nineteenth century was more favourable to the idea of communal education, and the birth, or rebirth of nearly all the present boarding schools in England in the middle of the century reflects in many ways the climate of opinion of the day. Essentially it was a reaction against individualism, and it showed itself in the spheres of both religious and secular thought. In another quite different way, the boarding school suited the age. In its economic aspect it represented, and still represents private enterprise in education. For boarding schools mean the maximum of competition between schools — the whole country is the market for which each school competes, and each school depends ultimately, like any other piece of private enterprise, on its ability to satisfy its customers, the parents.

Today, though religious belief is in a state of comparative decline, the ideals of co-operation and communal effort have invaded the economic sphere, and the case for the boarding school looks different. Its present economic basis is, perhaps, an anachronism, yet its training might be hailed as a major contribution to the production of enlightened members of a planned economy. If our arguments have been sound, this will be just as difficult as the production of enlight-

ened citizens. But the boarding school might well be the best way of fostering a higher sense of community in a firm or factory, where the sense of being 'in the enterprise' if felt by all members of the firm, is now regarded as an important incentive to production.

Educational thought has also changed. Though we no longer believe that environment can do everything, there is a growing recognition of the fact that, whether we want it or not, it will do something. This in itself constitutes a strong *prima facie* case for boarding schools. But it also finds its expression in various devices to ensure the the maximum co-operation between the day school and the home, so that the influence of both may be co-ordinated to a common purpose. On the other hand, there is more recognition of our duties to children as human beings, as well as potential adults. The extreme expression of this is to be found in some modern educational theories which claim that a happy and contented childhood is itself the best education — theories which solve the problem of the conflict of duties by denying that it exists. But the humanizing of boarding school life is a more moderate expression of the same tendency. And modifications of the system, such as weekly boarding whereby a boy spends week-ends with his family, imply the same idea — that a boy should not devote his whole life to education. Perhaps the only conclusion we can really arrive at is that the case for the boarding school needs re-examining and restating in terms both of twentieth-century needs and of twentieth-century beliefs.

## HOPKINS, THE DECADENT CRITIC

DONALD A. DAVIE

THERE are many ways of looking at the letters of Gerard Manley Hopkins. To the theologian and musician they can offer as much as to the critic and the prosodist. And anyone interested in the varieties of human friendship will find much to wonder at and admire. It is as a critic, however, that Hopkins is most surprising and most obviously impressive, for it is in his criticism that he is most plainly ahead of his time. His opinions of the verse of his contemporaries chime almost exactly with the views reached, fifty years after his death, by some of the best modern poets and critics. And this clairvoyance, added to the prestige of his poetry, has put him in certain circles almost above reproach. It will be the object of this essay to point out that while his criticism, especially of poetry, is so influential, it can also be dangerous. But because, in other circles, Hopkins as a poet can still be rejected out of hand, it is in place to say at the start that the present writer holds him to be perhaps the greatest Victorian poet, and the best critic of his age after Matthew Arnold. While making these claims, it is only fair to remind the reader that the Victorian age produced little great poetry *in any case*; and also to assure him that if Hopkins is the first critic after Arnold, he may come a long way after.

There is nothing to show that Hopkins' criticism developed very much from first to last. There is no great difference, in substance or in quality, between his first pronouncements and his latest. It is none the less convenient to observe an order roughly chronological, if only because the earliest statement of critical principles is also the most comprehensive. It occurs in a letter to Alexander William Mowbray Baillie, written in 1864, when Hopkins was twenty-one.<sup>1</sup> In this letter, Hopkins divides the language of verse into three kinds. The first is the language of inspiration:

The word inspiration need cause no difficulty. I mean by it a mood of great, abnormal in fact, mental acuteness, either energetic or receptive, according as the thoughts which arise in it seem generated by a stress or action of the brain, or to strike into it unasked.

The second kind of language is Parnassian:

It can only be spoken by poets, but is not in the highest sense poetry. It does not require the mood of mind in which the poetry of inspiration is written. It is spoken *on and from the level*

<sup>1</sup> *Further Letters of Gerard Manley Hopkins*, ed. Abbott, pp. 69-73.

of a poet's mind, not, as in the other case, when the inspiration which is the gift of genius, raises him above himself.

Parnassian is above all distinctive:

Great men, poets I mean, have each their own dialect as it were of Parnassian, formed generally as they go on writing, and at last — this is the point to be marked — they can see things in this Parnassian way and describe them in this Parnassian tongue, without further effort of inspiration. In a poet's particular kind of Parnassian lies most of his style, of his manner, of his mannerism if you like.

The third kind of language is treated only in passing:

The third kind is merely the language of verse as distinct from that of prose, Delphic, the tongue of the Sacred *Plain*, I may call it, used in common by poet and poetaster. Poetry when spoken is spoken in it, but to speak it is not necessarily to speak poetry.

There are also, he explains, two sub-kinds, the first Castalian, the second Olympian. Castalian is 'a higher sort of Parnassian', differing from the language of inspiration only because it lacks impersonality, is too characteristic of the writer. As for Olympian: 'This is the language of strange masculine genius which suddenly, as it were, forces its way into the domain of poetry, without naturally having a right there. Milman's poetry is of this kind I think, and Rossetti's *Blessed Damozel*. But unusual poetry has a tendency to seem so at first.'

It is remarkable how well these principles correspond with those in vogue today among the reviewers. For them 'Delphic' becomes 'poetic diction' (in a derogatory sense); 'Parnassian' is 'a distinctive voice', taken to be an improvement on the first stage; and 'the language of inspiration' is 'the profound impersonality of all art that is truly great'. The course of poetic advancement is often taken in this way to be from the impersonal (= 'undistinguished'), through the personal (= 'distinctive'), to the impersonal (= 'a disembodied voice'). But is it not true that the course may be run without deviating into the personal? that the voice can move from 'undistinguished, to 'distinguished', without once being 'distinctive'? It may seem that in periods when 'poetic diction' was not in such bad odour as it was for Hopkins and is for us, when, in particular, it was accompanied by the idea of 'purity' ('a pure diction'), this possibility was recognized. It is worth while asking whether, if we follow Hopkins in this (as I think we mostly do), we are limiting ourselves to a Victorian view of poetry, or whether we are only acceding to the extinction of a principle which was once fruitful but can be so no longer.

On joining the Society of Jesus, Hopkins destroyed the poetry he

had written before 1868, and produced no more for about nine years. As might be expected, his letters in this period contain no criticism. With the re-awakening of his creative talent in 1877, criticism engages him again.

In 1878, appeared another guiding principle in Hopkins' criticism, his devotion to Milton:

The same M. Arnold says Milton and Campbell are our two greatest masters of *style*. Milton's art is incomparable, not only in English literature, but, I should think, almost in any; equal, if not more than equal, to the finest of Greek or Roman. And considering that this is shewn especially in his verse, his rhythm and metrical system, it is amazing that so great a writer as Newman should have fallen into the blunder of comparing the first chorus of the *Agonistes* with the opening of *Thalaba* as instancing the gain in smoothness and correctness of versification made since Milton's time. . . .<sup>1</sup>

Milton is, for Hopkins, always the final court of appeal. And it is worth remarking that those modern readers who have most readily embraced Hopkins' poetry and his criticism are very often those who have called in question Milton's prestige, or at any rate the fruitfulness of his influence. Hopkins is quite unambiguous. He puts forward Milton, time and again, as a model; and in so doing he flies in the face not only of modern poets, Ezra Pound and T. S. Eliot, but also of Keats and Cowper. In effect, he challenges one of the best-authenticated working principles in the English poetic tradition — the principle that Milton, however great in himself, is a bad example for other poets. Was Hopkins alive to certain Miltonic aspects of his own poetry which his modern critics conspire to ignore, or merely cannot see? Of course, he was indebted to Milton for the first hints of his novel prosody, and this is certainly one aspect of his art which has not engaged his later readers so much as he expected. But this does not entirely explain the matter; for Milton repeatedly appears in connection with 'Style' and, while this term is never fully explained by Hopkins, it plainly involves for him much more than prosody. It is quite possible of course that the critics may have seen the nature of Hopkins' achievement, more clearly than he saw it himself; and that where he thought himself indebted to Milton, he was mistaken. But for students of his criticism the problem remains. Milton's practice is central to that criticism; and this must make it very different from the criticism of Keats, of Cowper, or of Mr Eliot. It is worth asking where and how Hopkins differs from these authorities and whether he differs for the better or for the worse.

<sup>1</sup> *The Correspondence of Gerard Manley Hopkins and Richard Watson Dixon*, ed. Abbott, p. 13.

'Miltonic style' soon appears in connection with another important principle, as novel as that of 'Parnassian', the idea of *inscape*:

No doubt my poetry errs on the side of oddness. I hope in time to have a more balanced and Miltonic style. But as air, melody, is what strikes me most of all in music and design in painting, so design, pattern or what I am in the habit of calling 'inscape' is what I above all aim at in poetry. Now it is the virtue of design, pattern, or inscape to be distinctive and it is the vice of distinctiveness to become queer. This vice I cannot have escaped.<sup>1</sup>

It has been found by critics of Hopkins' poetry that to explain *inscape* it is necessary to explore the poet's theology and philosophy, especially his admiring study of Duns Scotus. The same, of course, is true of his criticism. Every system of criticism rests, explicitly or not, upon a moral philosophy, and to do justice to the criticism one should ideally set it in that context. On the other hand I am concerned with how far Hopkins' standards of criticism are viable, how far they can be adopted with profit by readers professing quite different philosophies. And for this purpose it is enough to point out that, for Hopkins, since 'it is the virtue of design, pattern or inscape to be distinctive', this principle is closely related to 'the Parnassian'. Hopkins shows himself here aware of some of the dangers inherent in giving to 'distinctiveness' such value as he does. It is interesting to know how he intended to guard against those dangers, or whether he thought them only a risk that must be run.

To 1870 belong most of the snap-judgments that show Hopkins at his best. There is the comment on Swinburne, for instance:

I do not think that kind goes far: it expresses passion but not feeling, much less character. This I say in general or of Swinburne in particular. Swinburne's genius is astonishing, but it will, I think, only do one thing.<sup>2</sup>

Or this on Tennyson:

... there may be genius uninformed by character. I sometimes wonder at this in a man like Tennyson: his gift of utterance is truly golden, but go further home and you come to thoughts commonplace and wanting in nobility (it seems hard to say it but I think you know what I mean). In Burns there is generally recognized a richness and beauty of manly character which lends worth to some of his smallest fragments, but there is a great want in his utterance; it is never really beautiful, he had no eye for

<sup>1</sup> *The Letters of Gerard Manley Hopkins to Robert Bridges*, ed. Abbott, p. 66.

<sup>2</sup> *Letters to Bridges*, p. 79.



pure beauty, he gets no nearer than the fresh picturesque expressed in fervent and flowing language. . . .<sup>1</sup>

Or the comment on the age:

For it seems to me that the poetical language of an age should be the current language heightened, to any degree heightened and unlike itself, but not (I mean normally: passing freaks and graces are another thing) an obsolete one. That is Shakespeare's and Milton's practice and the want of it will be fatal to Tennyson's *Idylls* and plays, to Swinburne, and perhaps to Morris.<sup>2</sup>

Or, more generally, on obscurity:

One of two kinds of clearness one should have — either the meaning to be felt without effort as fast as one reads or else, if dark at first reading, when once made out *to explode*.<sup>3</sup>

This certainly does not exhaust the question of how a poet transmits his meanings, but it could hardly be bettered as a handy rule of thumb. In the same way, many readers will admire the way the critic goes at once to the heart of the matter, in the judgments on his contemporaries. But even here there are puzzling elements. However warmly we may agree that 'the poetical language of an age should be the current language heightened', we are not used to seeing Milton cited as an authority for it. Keats, we remember, discarded the Miltonic 'Hyperion' just because 'English must be kept up'. And in the same way, we may be sure that Hopkins is right about Tennyson and yet wonder if he is right about Burns. 'He had no eye for pure beauty . . .' — we suspect that 'pure beauty' never meant anything exact, and we should blush to see it in critical parlance today. Whatever the force of 'pure', we may find it a narrow notion of beauty that cannot find room for 'the fresh picturesque'. And does not such a narrowness reflect upon the critic?

The evidence of Hopkins' own poetry and what we know of his age can help us without much trouble to understand *inscape* on the one hand, and 'pure beauty' on the other, whatever we may think of their value as critical terms. And his own account of 'Parnassian' and the related categories is sufficiently clear. What gives most trouble is his usage of 'Style'. It recurs in his detailed criticism of poems by Bridges:

And 'pleasurable' is a prosaic word, I think: can you not find something better? It is not a bad word, but it falls flatly. (This reminds me that 'test' is to my ear prosaic in 'Thou didst delight', but could scarcely be changed.) Otherwise the poem is very beautiful, very fine in execution and style. Style seems your

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 95,

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 89.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 90,



great excellence, it is really classical. What fun if you were a classic! So few people have style, except individual style or manner — not Tennyson nor Swinburne nor Morris, not to name the scarecrow misbegotten Browning crew. Just think the blank verse these people have exuded, such as *Paracelsus*, *Aurora Leigh*, Baillie's or Bayley's *Festus*, and so on. The Brownings are very fine too in their ghastly way.<sup>1</sup>

This is very puzzling. 'Style', thus called 'classical' and opposed to 'manner', might seem to approach the Augustan notion of 'a pure diction'. Hopkins applauds both Dixon and Bridges for the beauty of gentlemanly character in all they write, and this might have something to do with a sort of serious urbanity which we can readily associate with such a diction. Moreover Hopkins is a stickler for propriety, as when he takes Bridges to task for confusing 'disillusion' and 'disenchantment'.<sup>2</sup> But we have already seen that, for Hopkins, 'classical' means 'Miltonic'. And what is more, the compliment is surely a left-handed one, since we have already learnt that what Hopkins values most in poetry is *inscape*, the distinctive. In denying to Bridges 'individual style or manner', Hopkins seems to deny him *inscape*, and plainly the language of Bridges can be neither Castalian or Parnassian, since these are pre-eminently distinctive. It must be either 'Delphic' or else 'the language of inspiration', and since the complimentary intention is clear, it must be the latter. And indeed since he tries always for *inscape*, and *inscape* is distinctive, it seems as if in his own poetry Hopkins commits himself to just that Parnassian which elsewhere he relegates to a second rank. This is in effect a *reductio ad absurdum*.

The point becomes a little clearer in a letter to Dixon of 1881, which is the fullest review by Hopkins of the English poetry of his own century:

The Lake poets and all that school represent, as it seems to me, the mean or standard of English style and diction, which culminated in Milton but was never very continuous or vigorously transmitted, and in fact none of these men unless perhaps Landor were great masters of style, though their diction is generally pure, lucid, and unarchaic.<sup>3</sup>

It is now clear that when Hopkins discerns 'Style', he discerns Miltonic style. It is important that the language of poets should be current and should observe propriety without being prosaic, and most of his contemporaries he thinks fail to observe these rules, but to observe them is not to guarantee 'Style'. What is still wanting

<sup>1</sup> *Letters to Bridges*, p. 111.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 121.

<sup>3</sup> *Correspondence with Dixon*, p. 98.

appears to be some sort of consistent elevation. If the language has all these, then it may be Miltonic and will therefore be 'Style'. The chief difficulty which remains is Hopkins' assumption that the language of Milton is somehow 'current'; and some readers may find this hard to concede.

As 'Style' is one of Milton's virtues, *inscape* is the other. Now since *inscape* is distinctive and admirable, and 'Parnassian' is distinctive and regrettable, and since it is absurd to suppose that Hopkins set out to write Parnassian, it follows that *inscape* has little or nothing to do with language at all, but is a quality of form and design. The poet who seeks *inscape* (Hopkins himself) must make his language current, proper and clear, and he may even, by adding elevation, attain to 'Style'. (Hopkins as we have seen hoped to achieve 'a more balanced Miltonic style', though he knew his other aim, distinctiveness, made it difficult.) But he has a task above or apart from this, a matter of distinctive formal disposition or moulding.

This notion engages Hopkins more and more.

In general I take it that other things being alike unity of action is higher the more complex the plot; it is the more difficult to effect and therefore the more valuable when effected. We judge so of everything.<sup>1</sup>

But how could you think such a thing of me as that I should in cold blood write 'fragments of a dramatic poem'? — I of all men in the world. To me a completed fragment, above all of a play, is the same unreality as a prepared impromptu.<sup>2</sup>

Now this is the artist's most essential quality, masterly execution: it is a kind of male gift and especially marks off men from women, the begetting one's thought on paper, on verse, on whatever the matter is; the life must be conveyed into the work and be displayed there, not suggested as having been in the artist's mind: otherwise the product is one of those hen's-eggs that are good to eat and look just like live ones but never hatch.<sup>3</sup>

It would be easy and idle to relate the metaphors of this last to 'Time's eunuch' (which occurs in the letters as well as the poem) and to the celibate rule. This train of thought may have had a special significance for the poet. For us, the three passages quoted point in the direction of something lost to English poetry since the Renaissance. We come nearest to what Hopkins meant by 'execution' by recalling Sidney's *Apologie for Poetrie* or an expression of Gabriel Harvey's — 'excellentest artificiality'. What is meant by

<sup>1</sup> Correspondence with Dixon, p. 113.

<sup>2</sup> Letters to Bridges, p. 218.

<sup>3</sup> Correspondence with Dixon, p. 133.

'execution' and *inscape* is the Renaissance idea of poem as artifact, a shape in space and time, added to creation, thrown out by will and energy, and the more elaborate the better. But if the artifact reappears, it is only with a difference. Sidney's poem was something added to the world, cut loose of its maker, absolute, anonymous, in its own right. The maker's energy was all to the casting forth, the endowment of independent life, the cutting of the threads from maker to made thing. Hopkins' poem on the contrary is to be distinctive; the systematic elaboration, and the setting of self-imposed tasks, generate the energy which throws the poem away from the poet, but only to the end that the reader, admiring the elaborate self-sufficiency, shall infer the energy and the shape of the making mind, and so work back to the poet again. The poet attempts a brilliant finesse. Things turn inside out. If he attains to 'Style', his impersonality is so conspicuous that it becomes his most intriguing personal trait; if he attains to *inscape*, the artificiality, the lack of intimacy, is the most intimate thing in the poem.

Such self-regarding ingenuity may be called decadent. Hopkins wrote in a decadent age, and if he is its greatest poet, he may be so because he cultivates his hysteria and pushes his sickness to the limit. Certainly he displays, along with the frantic ingenuity, another decadent symptom more easily recognized, the refinement and manipulation of sensuous appetite. This is an important, perhaps the essential part of that pure beauty which he recognized in Tennyson and missed in Burns, a quality of hectic intensity. Much of his work, in criticism and poetry alike, is concerned with restoring to a jaded palate the capacity for enjoyment. There is an interesting letter to Dixon, very revealing in this connection:

I remember that crimson and pure blues seemed to me spiritual and heavenly sights fit to draw tears once; now I can just see what I once saw, but can hardly dwell on it and should not care to do so.<sup>1</sup>

And, in his latest letters, there is a mild controversy with Patmore about Keats:

Since I last wrote I have reread Keats a little and the force of your criticism on him has struck me more than it did. It is impossible not to feel with weariness how his verse is at every turn abandoning itself to an unmanly and enervating luxury. It appears too that he said something like 'O for a life of impressions instead of thoughts.' It was, I suppose, the life he tried to lead. The impressions are not likely to have been all innocent and they soon ceased in death. His contemporaries,

<sup>1</sup> *Correspondence with Dixon*, p. 38.

as Wordsworth, Byron, Shelley, and even Leigh Hunt, right or wrong, still concerned themselves with great causes, as liberty and religion; but he lived in mythology and fairyland the life of a dreamer. Nevertheless I feel and see in him the beginnings of something opposite to this, of an interest in higher things and of powerful and active thought.<sup>1</sup>

Hopkins, it may be thought, misses the point, which is not that some of Keats' experiences cannot have been innocent, but that the whole of Keats' programme may have been 'vicious'. In his most important poems, the Odes, this is the question which Keats explores.

Of course, it is plain why Hopkins could not agree with Patmore about Keats. His earliest work, the school prize-poems, are conspicuously Keatsian, and revel in an excess of sensuous luxury; and of course this luxury is a conspicuous feature of all his verse. It is possible that Hopkins thought to counterbalance this Keatsian effeminacy by the strenuous masculinity of *inscape*; perhaps for some readers he does so and thereby attains a human mean, not decadent at all. Others again may find the compensating masculinity not in *inscape* at all but in the taut frame of intellectual argument in all the poems, an important aspect of his poetry which the poet seems to take curiously for granted. (One may suspect that it was this, more than rhythm or diction, which baffled Bridges sometimes; if so, neither Bridges nor Hopkins realized it.) Other readers again may find that *inscape* and sensuous luxury go together and make the poetry decadent, and that the strict Jesuitical logic, for all its discipline, is not really a sign of health, but only another aspect of that systematizing elaboration which produced the doctrine of *inscape* and the prosody. One has to leave this margin for difference of opinion for if 'decadent' occurs in the critic's vocabulary at all, it comes at the point where criticism is not distinguishable from moral philosophy.

At any rate, one cannot read the letters, even where they are concerned with music or the classical studies in the Dorian rhythms, without feeling that the systematic and the elaborate have a value for Hopkins in themselves, and not merely as instruments for reaching after truth. The doctrine of *inscape* admits as much. His thinking is casuistical. The most remarkable example of the value of the systematic for Hopkins is his letter to Bridges about Whitman:

Extremes meet, and (I must for truth's sake say what sounds pride) this savagery of his art, this rhythm in its last ruggedness and decomposition into common prose, comes near the last elaboration of mine. For that piece of mine is very highly wrought. The long lines are not rhythm run to seed: everything

<sup>1</sup> *Further Letters*, pp. 237, 238.

is weighed and timed in them. Wait till they have taken hold of your ear and you will find it so. No, but what it *is* like is the rhythm of Greek tragic choruses or of Pindar: which is pure sprung rhythm. And that has the same changes of cadence from point to point as this piece. If you want to try it, read one till you have settled the true places of the stress, mark these, then read it aloud, and you will see. Without this these choruses are prose bewitched; with it they are sprung rhythm like that piece of mine.<sup>1</sup>

The upshot of this is that Hopkins does not use his special rhythms in order to catch the movement of living speech. That is Whitman's policy but it is only Hopkins' starting-point. His rhythms differ from Whitman's (and by implication they are superior to Whitman's) sheerly because they are reduced to or elaborated into a system. Hopkins is systematic where Whitman is casual. And there, in the systematizing, resides the distinctive, the masculine, the *inscape*.

Surely something the same is true of Hopkins' language. We applaud him, and rightly, for making his language current and refusing archaism. But again that is only the start; the language is anything but current by the time Hopkins has finished with it. And of course that was his doctrine; poetic language must be based on the current speech but it could be elevated and elaborated *ad lib.*, as, in his view, it was by Milton. He says of Dryden:

I can scarcely think of you not admiring Dryden without, I may say, exasperation. And my style tends always more towards Dryden. What is there in Dryden? Much, but above all this: he is the most masculine of our poets; his style and his rhythms lay the strongest stress of all our literature on the naked thew and sinew of the English language, the praise that with certain qualifications one would give in Greek to Demosthenes, to be the greatest master of bare Greek.<sup>2</sup>

And what he says of Dryden has been applied by admiring critics to his own poems. But it does not really apply, or only with a difference. 'The native thew and sinew' is not enough for Hopkins. It has to be crammed, stimulated and knotted together. He has no respect for the language, but gives it Sandow-exercises until it is a muscle-bound monstrosity. It is the Keatsian luxury carried one stage further, luxuriating in the kinetic and muscular as well as the sensuous. Word is piled on word, and stress on stress, to crush the odours and dispense a more exquisite tang, more exquisite than the life. To have no respect for language is to have none for life; both

<sup>1</sup> *Letters to Bridges*, p. 157.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 267, 268.

life and language have to be heightened and intensified, before Hopkins can approve them. He has been praised more warmly still; and it is contended that his use of language is Shakespearean. Certainly Shakespeare shows similar audacity. But the cases are not parallel. For Shakespeare there was not, in this sense, a language to respect. It was still in the melting-pot, fluid, experimental and expanding rapidly. Even in their speaking, Shakespeare's contemporaries were at liberty to coin, convert, transpose, and cram together. Hopkins like Doughty treats nineteenth-century English as if it were still unstable and immature.

I think this is a true description of Hopkins' poetry, but to prove it one would need to move from point to point through several poems. At least such a view of language, poetic function, and human experience is implied in the system of criticism. That system (and, though it is available in fragmentary form, it is truly systematic), however it may touch at several points upon modern criticism, is violently at odds with what distinguished later poets have laid down in theory or implied in critical practice. The gulf between Hopkins and Mr Pound, for instance, or Mr Eliot, is very wide, and can be shown most neatly perhaps by comparing the attitudes taken by the three poets towards Dante. For both Eliot and Pound, Dante has been consistently a pole of reference, in Mr Eliot's specially limited sense 'a classic', and for both poets he has been in particular a model of poetic diction:

The border-line between 'gee whizz' and Milton's tumified dialect must exist (Dante in *De Vulgari Eloquentia*, seems to have thought of a good many particulars of the problem).<sup>1</sup>

The language of each great English poet is his own language; the language of Dante is the perfection of a common language.<sup>2</sup>

Hopkins' solitary comment on Dante is perhaps the most astonishing judgment in all three volumes of the letters:

This leads me to say that a kind of touchstone of the highest or most living art is seriousness; not gravity but the being in earnest with your subject — reality. It seems to me that some of the greatest and most famous works are not taken in earnest enough, are farce (where you ask the spectator to grant you something not only conventional but monstrous). I have this feeling about *Faust* and even about the *Divine Comedy*, whereas *Paradise Lost* is most seriously taken. It is the weakness of the whole Roman literature.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Letters of Ezra Pound*, ed. Paige, p. 349.

<sup>2</sup> T. S. ELIOT: 'Dante', in *Selected Essays*, p. 252.

<sup>3</sup> *Letters to Bridges*, p. 225.



It is true that Hopkins' judgment does not turn upon Dantesque diction, but seems rather related to the doctrinal differences between Scotist and Thomist. Nevertheless, the judgment, from a Jesuit poet, is remarkable. And of course it is plain that there is, in Hopkins' criticism, no room for such a notion as 'the perfection of a common language' or for highly rating a language which strikes a mean between current slang and Miltonic elevation. When Hopkins writes of a mean style he means the Miltonic style, and when he writes of 'pure diction' he means no more than observation of propriety. When he esteems gentlemanliness or 'character' in the writing of Bridges and Dixon he means neither Arnold's urbanity nor the Aristotelean mean, but 'character' in the sense of 'a man of character', i.e. something built up and maintained by the will. Even 'the language of the poetic plain', we remember, is called 'Delphic', that is, vatic, esoteric and elevated.

It is true, of course, that not only Hopkins but all the critics of his period were far from esteeming or even recognizing 'pure diction' in this sense. But Hopkins is further from it even than his contemporaries. The last passage quoted, for instance, makes play with what is obviously Hopkins' version of the 'high seriousness' of Arnold; and this may serve to remind us that in Hopkins' lifetime Arnold was the critic who came nearest to the idea of 'the perfection of a common language'. Arnold made the idea a principle in the criticism of prose, excluding it from poetry. His most elaborate statement of this position occurs in *The Influence of Literary Academies*, where he finds that Attic prose is valuable because it maintains a valuable urbanity, the tone and spirit of the centre as opposed to the provincial spirit. He finds that there is a strong tradition of such prose-writing in France, but he seeks it in vain in England, where the masters of prose-style (Jeremy Taylor, Burke, Ruskin, Kinglake) employ a rhetorical 'poetic' prose. English prose comes nearest to the Attic model in Addison or (in the critic's own day) Newman. Hopkins valued Arnold's criticism and rebuked Bridges for calling him 'Mr Kid-glove Cocksure'. He mentions *The Influence of Literary Academies* in a letter of 1864 to Baillie:

You must also read, if you have not done so, Matthew Arnold on 'The literary influence of Academies' in the August *Cornhill*. Much that he says is worth attention, but, as is so often the case, in censuring bad taste he falls into two flagrant pieces of bad taste himself. I am coming to think much of taste myself, good taste and moderation, I who have sinned against them so much. But there is a prestige about them which is indescribable.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Further Letters*, p. 74.



It is more than twenty years later that he gives what is obviously his considered rejoinder to Arnold's argument. It occurs in a letter to Patmore:

... when I read your prose and when I read Newman's and some other modern writers' the same impression is borne in on me: no matter how beautiful the thought, nor, taken singly, with what happiness expressed, you do not know what *writing prose* is. At bottom what you do and what Cardinal Newman does is to think aloud, to think with pen to paper. In this process there are certain advantages; they may outweigh those of a perfect technic; but at any rate they exclude that; they exclude the belonging technic, the belonging rhetoric, the own proper eloquence of written prose. Each thought is told off singly and there follows a pause and this breaks the continuity, the *contentio*, the strain of address, which writing should usually have.

The beauty, the eloquence, of good prose cannot come wholly from the thought. With Burke it does and varies with the thought; when therefore the thought is sublime so does the style appear to be. But in fact Burke had no style properly so called: his style was colourlessly to transmit his thought. Still he was an orator in form and followed the common oratorical tradition, so that his writing has the strain of address I speak of above.

But Newman does not follow the common tradition — of writing. His tradition is that of cultured, the most highly educated, conversation; it is the flower of the best Oxford life. Perhaps this gives it a charm of unaffected and personal sincerity that nothing else could. Still he shirks the technic of written prose and shuns the tradition of written English. He seems to be thinking 'Gibbon is the last great master of traditional English prose; he is its perfection: I do not propose to emulate him; I begin all over again from the language of conversation, of common life'.

You too seem to me to be saying to yourself 'I am writing prose, not poetry; it is bad taste and a confusion of kinds to employ the style of poetry in prose: the style of prose is to shun the style of poetry and to express one's views with point'. But the style of prose is a positive thing and not the absence of verse-forms and pointedly expressed thoughts are single hits and give no continuity of style.<sup>1</sup>

Plainly Hopkins now so highly values *inscape*, elevation and distinctiveness, that they are to be a principle of prose no less than

<sup>1</sup> *Further Letters*, pp. 231, 232.

poetry. The comments on Burke are quite unambiguous; Hopkins censures him because when his thoughts were not sublime, neither was his style. This is as far as may be from what is almost taken for granted today, the principle that in any sort of writing that style is best which transmits most accurately the thought or the feeling of the writer.

As might be expected, Hopkins' judgments of his contemporaries are in general less acceptable to modern opinion when he speaks of prose-writers, than when he judges the poets. Stevenson is his hero:

In my judgment the amount of gift and genius which goes into novels in the English literature of this generation is perhaps not much inferior to what made the Elizabethan drama, and unhappily it is in great part wasted. How admirable are Blackmore and Hardy! Their merits are much eclipsed by the overdone reputation of the Evans-Eliot-Lewis-Cross woman (poor creature! one ought not to speak slightly, I know), half real power, half imposition. Do you know the bonfire scenes in the *Return of the Native* and still better the sword-exercise scene in the *Madding Crowd*, breathing epic? or the wife-sale in the *Mayor of Casterbridge* (read by chance)? But these writers only rise to their great strokes; they do not write continuously well; now Stevenson is master of a consummate style and each phrase is finished as in poetry.<sup>1</sup>

The condescension to George Eliot of course has probably more to do with her sexual conduct, than with her writing. Stevenson's 'consummate style' is chiefly a matter of 'word-painting'.<sup>2</sup> This narrow idea of the functions of prose-style corresponds to the narrowness of that 'pure beauty' which excluded Burns.

In 1886 *inscape* is still the ultimate criterion. The lack of it is damning to Sir Samuel Ferguson, for instance:

... for he was a poet; the *Forging of the Anchor* is, I believe, his most famous poem; he was a poet as the Irish are — to judge by the little of his I have seen — full of feeling, high thoughts, flow of verse, point, often fine imagery and other virtues, but the essential and only lasting thing left out — what I call *inscape*, that is species or individually — distinctive beauty of style ...<sup>3</sup>

Plainly *inscape* is the clue to whatever is still puzzling in Hopkins. And it is not necessary to examine its philosophical basis in his thought or its manifestation in his poems. It is time to ask what it means in simple terms of human personality. *Inscape* is, we remem-

<sup>1</sup> *Letters to Bridges*, pp. 238, 239.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 267.

<sup>3</sup> *Further Letters*, p. 225.

ber, specifically a Miltonic virtue. Now on Milton the man as distinct from the poet, there is only one comment among all the letters. It was made in 1877 to Bridges:

Don't like what you say of Milton, I think he was a very bad man: those who contrary to our Lord's command both break themselves and, as St. Paul says, consent to those who break the sacred bond of marriage, like Luther and Milton, fall with eyes open into the terrible judgment of God.<sup>1</sup>

It does me little credit, perhaps, that I find here an anti-climax little short of comical. Of course 'the sacred bond of marriage' is an important matter. And I can well understand anyone, especially a Roman Catholic, who finds Milton 'a very bad man'; but I do not expect to find him called a bad man, only in the sense that George Eliot is 'a bad woman'. I expect to find the verdict go against Milton on more general and comprehensive grounds, precisely as a type of the extreme Protestant. One thinks to find the characteristic formulae of later Catholic writers — 'individualism', perhaps, or 'humanistic arrogance', all that aspect of Milton which has to do with his ambivalent treatment of the Lucifer figure. This is conspicuous by its absence from all Hopkins' comments on Milton. And it is not hard to see why. Hopkins' theory and his practice point in one direction. Put together such recurrent terms as *inscape*, 'sublime', 'distinctiveness', 'masculinity', 'character', and one is forced to the conclusion that it was just this, Milton's egotism, individualism and arrogance, which made him, for Hopkins, the model poet. His own poetry and his own criticism proceed from the single assumption that the function of poetry is to express a human individuality in its most wilfully uncompromising and provocative form. His is the poetry and the criticism of the egotistical sublime. Dixon answered the contention, that poetry was incompatible with membership of the Society of Jesus, by saying he could not see how one vocation could clash with the other. It was true, so long as the poet's vocation was conceived as Dixon conceived of it. But Hopkins knew better, and he was right too. He conceived of poetry as self-expression at its most relentless, as a vehicle for the individual will to impose itself on time. Between that and any sort of Christian calling there could be no compromise at all.

<sup>1</sup> *Letters to Bridges*, p. 39.

## THE ARCHITECTS' PEDIGREE, 1600-1800

BERNICE HAMILTON

If a profession involves organization,<sup>1</sup> there can be no question of there being a profession of architecture during this period; nor do the architects form a coherent group within the professional middle classes. Our *terminus ad quem* — the moment when architecture as a profession can strictly be said to begin — is perhaps the foundation date of the R.I.B.A.<sup>2</sup> (1834), though at a meeting of the Architects' Club in the Freemasons' Tavern in London on March 29th, 1792, the profession and qualifications of the architect were defined, and the *Morning Chronicle* of February 5th, 1798, published an advance notice of *The Architect's Catechism*, defining the duties and qualifications of an architect and surveyor. It would be safe to say that by 1800 the profession was at least conscious of itself. Our *terminus ab quo* is more of a problem. Early buildings have the anonymity of a ballad; the profession rises, like a river, from many small springs, and it would be as useless and inaccurate to speak of 'the birth of the architect' as of 'the origin of a money economy'. We should in any case have to go far back, for it appears that the master masons of the medieval craft were responsible for submitting plans and designs.<sup>3</sup>

The question of the architect's *status* hardly arises in the early days, for he was either a gentleman or a builder — yet even this is too rigid a generalization: what of the Mylne family, who were for so long Master Masons to the Crown of Scotland? John Mylne II, born in 1611 (who was also from 1637 mason to the City of Edinburgh at a yearly salary of £100 Scots) was in 1643 admitted a burgess of Kirkaldy immediately after a very distinguished company, mostly leaders of the Covenanters. During the Commonwealth he was one of the 21 Commissioners to the English parliament from Scotland, and represented the City of Edinburgh on the (abortive) commission for a Treaty of Union in 1652. His epitaph sums up his unusual capacities:

Rare man he was, who could unite in one  
Highest and lowest occupation:  
To sit with Statesmen, Councillors to Kings,  
To work with Tradesmen in Mechanick things.

<sup>1</sup> 'A profession can only be said to exist when there are bonds between the practitioners.' A. M. CARR-SAUNDERS and P. A. WILSON: *The Professions*.

<sup>2</sup> *The Growth and Work of the R.I.B.A.* (1834-1934), edited by J. A. Gotch.

<sup>3</sup> LAURIE: *A History of Freemasonry*.

We might amend our original statement by saying, cautiously, that men retained by important corporations were usually of a higher social class, for only such corporations had the financial stability which enabled them to offer employment for continuous periods. In the records of the Office or Board of Works we find most of the greater architects employed between 1615 (when Inigo Jones was appointed Surveyor General of the Works) and 1814 when Stuart<sup>1</sup> finished the building at Greenwich, in which Wren (till 1716), Vanbrugh (till 1726), Campbell (till 1729) and Ripley (from 1729), to mention only a few, had all taken a hand. The records of Cambridge University<sup>2</sup> show how building could be financed: Dr Eachard at St Catharine's sacrificed his own means and persuaded some of the Fellows to do the same, so that building went on for fourteen years without interruption. (When he died in 1697 the building funds were found to be greatly embarrassed.) Bequests were also frequent: further building at Cat's followed a benefaction from Mrs Ramsden in 1743, and Gibbs was paid for his work in King's partly out of the estate of John Hungerford, Esq., of Lincoln's Inn, though the planned work was not finished till 1822 when there was more money from the sale of timber. Sales of timber were frequent: between 1712 and 1719 Provost John Adam of King's started a building fund arising out of sales of timber, and then canvassed for subscriptions. Fellowships were also sometimes suppressed to obtain money for building.

In the case of the legal and medical professions, which were organized early, evidence of their rise and the problems involved can be found largely in records of associations and in polemical pamphlets. But the material for the origins of professions still unorganized in 1800 can only be found in letters and biographies (where they exist), in family papers and in the records of institutions like the Universities, the Office of Works, etc. Especially in these latter we can see what a variety of builders and designers was associated with the planning and overseeing of buildings during the two centuries. In early days the commonest is the carpenter, bricklayer or mason who makes a design at need and appends his name, but is not sure of his status: Acroyde, Symons, Arnold and Price of Yarmouth are well-known free masons of the early seventeenth century, together with Westley of Cambridge (d. 1656), a mason or bricklayer, who is called by the bursar of Clare, Mr Barnabas Oley, 'that good workman that built the college', and Holt, a carpenter. All supplied designs. The most famous mason family associated with Cambridge are the Grumbolds who came from the stone-quarrying area of Raundes in Northamptonshire.

<sup>1</sup> Life of Stuart, in *Antiquities of Athens*, vol. IV.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. WILLIS and CLARK: *An Architectural History of Cambridge*, 3 vols.

Thomas (d. 1657), and described like Symons and Westley as 'free mason', built the east gate of Clare Hall in 1639, and in the following year designed the bridge. His successor, Robert, who inherited the business, progressed from being a mere workman at Christ's, Clare and St Catharine's, through master-mason work at Trinity Library, to alterations and repairs at Emmanuel and the Regent House, and towards the end of the century was designing, *inter alia*, the new Hall at Clare and the new chapel at St John's. Yet all the time he busied himself, as did even James Essex, with what we should consider trivial details like inserting sash windows, building gate-piers, and constructing fountains, not to mention garden lay-outs. That Ralph Symons and Gilbert Wigge, who worked on Emmanuel, Sidney Sussex and Trinity actually designed the second court of John's (1598-1602) is proved by the 14th clause of the agreement with the builders (August 7th, 1598) which ends:

to furnish and accomplish thyse whole building accordinge to the true entent and meaning of this bargaine, and accordinge to the plots subscribed with the said Ralph Symons and Gilbert Wigge their hands.

Also in clause 2 are mentioned 'the platte and uprights drawn by the said Simons and Wigge'.

Wigge went on, after Symons's retirement, to build the range next to the street in the Walnut-tree Court of Queens' (1616-19). In 1618, in making a payment, Queen's refers to him and his associate Henry Mann as *architects*. The term was for a long time highly fluid: the first-mentioned architect in Cambridge university records is one Theodore Haveus of Cleves, employed in the middle of the sixteenth century by Caius to construct a sundial, and, as far as we know, nothing else; he is described as 'a skilful artificer and eminent architect'. The fluidity is not merely one of terminology: the mason-designer who builds houses and colleges does not disdain to work on the same job as a day-labourer, and turns his hand to anything that is going. Robert Grumbold, who designed for Clare about 1669, was at the same time employed as a working mason on the buildings. In 1685 he was still receiving a payment of 20s. a week which covered both designs and work. In part this is to be explained by the tradition, which lasted till the Regency, that not only a builder but even an architect must begin with a particular craft, e.g. carpentry.<sup>1</sup> Again, a man who is called in his youth carpenter or mason, and turns his hand to any job, may finish by being called 'an eminent architect'. James Essex<sup>2</sup> is the outstanding example of this.

<sup>1</sup> Nash originally called himself a carpenter. JOHN SUMMERSON: *Life of John Nash*, 1934, p. 25.

<sup>2</sup> See WILLIS and CLARK, *op. cit.*, and also *The Life of James Essex, F.S.A.* (Cambridge Antiquarian Society).



When he directed the rebuilding of Nevile's Court (Trinity) in 1755-46 he was called 'Mr Essex, the fashionable architect of the time', and in the MS History of Queens' College the re-building of Erasmus Court (1756-60) is said to have been 'planned and executed by Mr Essex, an eminent architect and a man of good understanding and character in Cambridge'. Yet in the Clare Hall accounts (January 9th, 1766) he is still described as Mr Essex, Carpenter, possibly because he inherited his father's business, or because carpentry was his basic craft.<sup>1</sup>

Next, there is the dilettante who designs for fun, but sometimes asks money for his design, or becomes so interested in his work and reputation that he undertakes commissions and even plays with the idea of 'setting up'. James Burrough, born 1691, a don of Caius, and subsequently Master of his College till his death in 1764, practised architecture though 'in what manner his previous education had prepared him for it does not appear'. Some authorities even say that Essex studied under him. He was extremely jealous of the professional architects, and when Newcastle (the Chancellor) in 1754 brought down Stephen Wright with a rival plan (which might prove cheaper), for the south wing of the Senate House court, all this 'occasioned a great deal of Animosity and ill Temper in the University, and the Duke, in order to cajole and bring into Temper Mr Burrough, soon procured him a knighthood'.

One of the most interesting eighteenth-century examples of the amateur architect, Sanderson Miller of Radway,<sup>2</sup> can be studied through his own correspondence. Miller, born in 1717, was the son of a wealthy merchant turned landowner, who moved in circles much higher than his own (his friends included Pitt, the Grenvilles and Lyttletons, and Lord North). He began building as a hobby on his own estate with fountains and cascades, and went on to Gothick ruins and towers for himself and his friends. Pococke, Bishop of Ossory, writes in his *Tour through England* in September 1756:

I came to Mr Miller's house at Radway. This gentleman who lives on his Estate, has a great genius for architecture, especially the Gothic . . . He has erected a very noble round Tower, which is entire, with a drawbridge, to which there is an ascent as by a ruine . . .

Before that we find George Lyttleton writing (in 1749) to Miller

<sup>1</sup> The carpenter-architect died out in the late seventeenth century on account of the timber shortage, and from then on a carpenter working on buildings had little sense of the work as a whole (cf. BLOMFIELD: *A History of Renaissance Architecture*).

<sup>2</sup> *An 18th Century correspondence: Letters to Sanderson Miller of Radway*, edited by L. Dickens and M. Stanton, 1915.

a letter which illustrates perfectly the contemporary attitude towards architecture as a pastime:

You great genius's [*sic*] in architecture must expect to be importuned by your friends . . . I ventured to promise that you should draw one [a castle] for his Lordship [Hardwicke at Wimpole] . . . because I thought it would be agreeable to you to do him this pleasure . . . I make no apologies as I know that these works are an amusement to you, and that a heart made like yours finds its own happiness in doing acts of friendship and kindness.

The fact that some of Miller's works fell down was, despite Horace Walpole's sneers, not discouraging to his friends, one of whom writes:

There is no one who is not liable to accidents of this kind, witness the bridge at Westminster, which has failed in most essential parts though all the best Architects of the Nation were employed or consulted in the building of it . . .; [and Lord Deerhurst adds] I can assure you that your fame for Architecture is not at all diminished by it. A Friend of mine, apprised of this accident, came to me yesterday and told me that he was going to build a Gothic Front to a stable, and that as no one was so great a Master . . . etc.

Miller's work, while mainly fancy, also included some serious house-building, such as altering a house at Hagley for Admiral Smith, and supplying the plans and superintending the building of a house at Ambrosden for Sir Edward Turner. That the dividing line was rather blurred between the amateur and the professional architect is shown by a letter from Lord Dacre, who writes:

If you have a mind to set up, you will soon eclipse Mr Kent, especially in the Gothick way, in which to my mind he succeeds very ill.

The use of the phrase 'set up' marks the recognition of the dividing line: the implication that Miller could have succeeded as a competitive architect displays less sense of reality. Miller had, however, an ideal about building which raised his 'pastime' above amusement level. Writing to Prowse from Ambrosden in January 1754 he says:

I can always see more faults in my own performance than I love to think on, and I would never draw a line more if I did not see much worse in the shocking designs of common workmen . . . Believe that I only endeavour to serve my Country as a Builder with as much zeal as you serve yours in a station of highest trust and importance. . . .

For Miller, that is to say, architecture was something between an art and a piece of amateur public service like serving as a J.P. During the eighteenth century it became, more than ever, a pastime for the nobility. Even Lord Bute turned his hand to it: in a letter of February 25th, 1772, to Baron Mure he writes:

I have sketched out my idea of a house for you . . . in my rough way of calculation that I mentioned to you . . . it comes to £4,500 . . . If you build, I present you with my labours; if not, pay me for my plan.<sup>1</sup>

By comparison with most aristocratic dabbling Sanderson Miller was nearly a professional.

The Cambridge University records, which illustrate the almost imperceptible transition from craftsman to architect (as do some family histories<sup>2</sup>) also show the rise of London reputations at the expense of local ones,<sup>3</sup> and the increasing custom of calling in a London man. Inigo Jones, if not as Sir Alexander Carr Saunders suggests, the first real architect, seems to be the first of a succession of London architects to be called in. He designed the second court of John's<sup>4</sup>; Wren then followed with Pembroke Chapel (1663), the second court of Trinity (1665) and Trinity Library (1676). Hawksmoor was responsible for parts of John's (1669) and King's (1713). Gibbs was employed in 1722 to design the Senate House, and other works not executed, and on the building which bears his name in King's, also part of a larger uncompleted design. But the professional architect from London did not entirely dominate the Cambridge scene until early in the nineteenth century, when firms of partners on modern lines began to be employed.

Undifferentiation is the key-note of the whole period. In the first place many architects are not only architects but dons like Burrough or Masters, craftsmen like Essex, or country gentlemen like Sanderson Miller — even Gregory King, the political arithmetician, laid out Soho Square and Greek (?Grig) Street. Secondly, it is not at all clear what an architect is supposed to do: his work may well include engineering and surveying as well as what we would

<sup>1</sup> *Caldwell Papers*, Pt. II, vol. II, p. 195.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Robert Mylne, died 1811. On the family mausoleum he is called Architect, Engineer 'and lineal descendant by birth and profession of John Mylne, Master Mason to King James the Third of Scotland'.

<sup>3</sup> Some indication of the country-wide spread of reputations can be seen from the fact that Adam drawings have been found for 36 English, 3 Welsh, 26 Scottish and 4 Irish counties.

<sup>4</sup> Outsiders were often consulted on quite minor matters, e.g. College Order, John's, 29th January, 1765:

'Agreed that a Surveyor be sent for from London . . . to examine whether the building in the second court will support the intended observatory'.

now call architecture. It was river navigation which first interested John Wood of Bath,<sup>1</sup> and both of the eighteenth-century Mylnes were connected with canals — William also with waterworks and drainage. William Adam, the father of Robert and James, a prosperous Edinburgh architect, drained coalfields. Thomas and Paul Sandby surveyed the Highland roads after the '45. Two architect-pupils who were in Robert Taylor's office at the same time as Nash took similar turnings: William Pilkington became surveyor of various estates and parishes; C. A. Craig became clerk to the Westminster Paving Board. So common was it to graduate from road-building to architecture that we find Horace Walpole writing<sup>2</sup> after the accession of George III:

Building, I am told is the King's favourite study; and I hope our architects will not be taken from the erectors of turnpikes.

It seems fairly clear that the divorce of engineering from architecture comes with the use of iron, and later, steel, involving new techniques for the new medium; though for a time the old architects went on building bridges in the new way.<sup>3</sup> Surveying differentiates itself within the period with even greater difficulty.<sup>4</sup> Again, there is a very considerable range of opinion about the amount of overseeing which an architect should do. John Mylne's contract in 1666 for the building of Panmure House for the Earl of Panmure stated that

the said John Mylne is to be upon the place at the foundation when everything may be spoke of that concerns the first storie . . . As also the said John Mylne obleidges himself to be present at the beginning of every story.

In the eighteenth century Gandon was so accustomed to an architect overseeing his building that he refused to believe Kilmainham was by Inigo Jones when it was built from his designs thirty-two years after his death.<sup>5</sup> Having drawn the plans for the new Irish House of Commons, he was 'mortified' to find the execution entrusted to Messrs Park and Murphy. Sanderson Miller, however, seldom had complete control over his work: in some cases he was

<sup>1</sup> *Some Notes on John Wood of Bath* (Bath Corporation Bi-Centenary Pamphlet) 1927.

<sup>2</sup> *Letters*, vol. V, p. 16, January 3rd, 1761.

<sup>3</sup> Nash, for example, was involved in a project of Sir Edward Winnington's for an iron bridge over the Teme. It is interesting that the Institute of Civil Engineers was founded in 1818, sixteen years before the R.I.B.A.

<sup>4</sup> In 1615 when Jones became Surveyor General of the Works this did not merely imply erecting and repairing buildings for the Crown, but also riding up and down England doing a lot of supervising and enforcing compliance with the building regulations. Wren was also constantly occupied with building regulations, compensation, etc.

<sup>5</sup> T. MULVANY: *Life of Gandon*.

unable to go and supervise the actual building, in others his patrons had clear ideas as to what they wanted, and interfered or consulted other architects in the course of the work. In the case of Hagley Hall he actually supervised the building, though Sir George Lyttleton pressed practically everyone he knew into making plans. He did not at all appear to mind making designs for buildings which he had never seen. Stowe is an instance of Robert Adam's<sup>1</sup> being asked to give designs for work of which he was not to be in charge. (The actual work was in the hands of Italians.) James Adam engaged a large number of builders, who followed the general lines of his plans, and over whom he did not exercise much control. In the official records of the Register House at Edinburgh the Adams are seen agreeing to furnish all drawings and

visit the work once every year if necessary, or once in two years, at the rate of two per cent on the money expended on the buildings, and fifty guineas as the expense of each journey to Edinburgh.

At Adam's suggestion, one James Salisbury was appointed Clerk of the Works at £100 plus the expenses of the journey (later he was also given a house). Salisbury was also employed as carpenter. But a letter from Adam of August 12th, 1776, to the Lord Register shows that he kept closely in touch with the work from London.

During the eighteenth century in the lower reaches of building the increasing use of pattern-books<sup>2</sup> and in the upper reaches the grand engraved designs<sup>3</sup> gave considerable scope for copying and confusion. It was an age of unashamed plagiarizing, of publishing, altering and claiming other people's designs.<sup>4</sup> It is often very hard therefore to say who is responsible for any particular work, since

<sup>1</sup> A. T. BOLTON: *The Architecture of Robert and James Adam*, 1922.

<sup>2</sup> WILLIAM HALFPENNY'S *Useful Architecture in 21 New Designs for Country Parsonages, Farm-Houses and Inns* (1752), *The Builder's Pocket Treasurer* (1763), and *The Practical Builders' and Workmen's Assistants* (1774), to mention only a few, were best sellers. The writers were mostly tradesmen, and described themselves as 'Architect and carpenter', etc. Batty Langley is one of the most famous: in 1742 he even published a book called *Gothic Architecture Improved*, which tried to show that 'the orders' existed in Gothic as well as in classical architecture.

<sup>3</sup> Early in the century the fashion began of publishing costly books of measured drawings: these were often imaginary buildings, or were changed for advertisement, especially in the case of Colin Campbell. Subscriptions to these books were high, and it is interesting to see in the list of subscribers to the first edition of *Vitruvius Britannicus* (1715) among aristocratic names those of Mr Blacket, joiner, Mr Prichard, mason, Mr Peters, painter, and Mr Sanders, joiner; and as late as 1767, when Wolfe and Gandon issued vols. IV and V of the same work, several carpenters, bricklayers, masons and plasterers subscribed for copies. (Cf. BLOMFIELD: *A History of Renaissance Architecture*, p. 213.)

<sup>4</sup> e.g. Kent's publication of Inigo Jones's designs.

there were many last-minute changes of mind about commissions,<sup>1</sup> and houses often took a generation to build.<sup>2</sup> Lesser architects often supervised for greater: Hawksmoor<sup>3</sup> (if, indeed, we can call him a lesser architect) often supervised for Vanbrugh; and few people built exactly from their original plans: Wren made an amateurish plan for St. Paul's but modified it considerably as he went along, and Inigo Jones also trusted much more to the supervision of his work than to the original drafts. To take only one example, Thomas Archer's actual building of St. Philip's, Birmingham, was a great improvement on the plate of Campbell. It is possible that an improvement in the accuracy of drawing may have led to some decline in supervising.

The late eighteenth century was also an age of unrivalled jobbery and of accusations of jobbery, as competition increased and opportunities for profit mounted. James Wyatt was accused of using an expensive cement in repairs at Westminster 'because he had an interest in the patent':<sup>4</sup> there may have been some truth in the matter since after his death that cement was manufactured by a firm called J. and C. Wyatt and Co.<sup>5</sup> Nash was also accused of bullying bricklayers into buying bricks from his own kilns at Norwood, but no evidence was ever produced.<sup>6</sup> The very prevalence of the accusations, however, shows that practices like this were not uncommon. Soane came in for many personal and party attacks, and on one occasion for the resentment of a builder called Norris, whom he believed he had found cheating. Wyatt, a notorious architectural pluralist, also claimed the House of Lords job over his head, as part of the Office of Works routine, after Soane had submitted successful plans. Scathing verse and pamphlets, all on a rather low level, began to fly around.

<sup>1</sup> The plans for Senate House court in Cambridge so confused contemporaries that they attributed the building to Burrough. It is possible that Park and Murphy's *designs* were also used on the Irish House of Commons. There are dozens of other cases.

<sup>2</sup> The Register House in Edinburgh was fifteen years a-building. Charlecote took twenty years. Greenwich was worked on for about two hundred. Admiral Delaval, for whom Vanbrugh was building a house at Seaton Delaval, died, and he continued the work for Sir Francis Blake. The building of Blenheim is notorious. In March 1759 Sir George Lyttelton writes despairingly to Sanderson Miller:

Sir Gregory Page got into his house all dry and well, the third year from the Foundations being laid . . . By what I hear I may not be able to get into mine these seven years . . .

<sup>3</sup> H. S. G. RENDEL: *Nicholas Hawksmoor*, 1924.

LAWRENCE WHISTLER: *John Vanbrugh*.

CHRISTIAN BARMAN: *John Vanbrugh*.

<sup>4</sup> *Farington Diary*, December 1st, 1806.

<sup>5</sup> ANTHONY DALE: *James Wyatt*, 1936.

<sup>6</sup> The select commission of March 1831.



The importance of the client in the development of architecture, both as an art and as a profession, cannot be overstressed: patronage afflicts architecture more than any other profession. In Cambridge the dons had (rightly) a great say in plans.<sup>1</sup> John Mylne's contract with the Earl of Panmure, while unusually explicit,<sup>2</sup> is merely typical of the say which great men often had in the building of their houses. During the period when the wealthy amateur took up architecture as an elegant accomplishment he often furnished designs or gave instructions, and then took credit. Architects dependent on patrons found it simpler not to fuss; but where the patron was not so important the worm sometimes turned. In December 1747 Revd. Robert Masters, Fellow and Bursar of Corpus, employed James Essex to measure the ground and draw a plan for a new court to the College. He then apparently printed and circulated the plan as his own — probably with some idea that the patron was proprietor of the design. Essex promptly published proposals for engraving and printing *his* plan by subscription (September 20th, 1748). On October 3rd, Masters replied by informing

the Publick that the Original Draught of it by Mr Master's own Hand . . . may be seen by anyone at his Chambers in the said *College*, and that Essex was no otherwise employ'd therein than copying out his Design.

Essex challenged him to publish it, and then pointed out that it was an incorrect copy of his own drawings, in which the staircase had been left out, and the measurements of plan and elevation did not agree.

<sup>1</sup> Provost John Adam of King's interviewed Wren at Hawksmoor's house about the new court at King's. Hawksmoor had already made plans and models. Adam radically criticized them:

I did not like the jutting out of ye Pillars of ye Portal nor number of them; desir'd they might be but four, and clapt close to ye Rest of the Building . . . He had made ye Studys and Bed parts to be towards ye Quadrangle. I thought them better towards ye River and ordered them to be so. I desir'd this wing might be set more backward to give a full view of ye Chappel. Agreed to. I told him ye Light would be Majestick of its selfe and in its plainness more answerable to ye Chappel, and desir'd all Ornaments might be avoided. . . .

(In the event this plan was not adopted, either because of the death of Anne or of Adam himself, and much dispute followed before the work was allocated and completed.)

<sup>2</sup> 'And if it shall happen that his lordship at any time during the erecting of the said building shall desyne to alter or change any door or chymney in the tyme of the said John Mylne's absence the Overseer of the work is to do according to the said nobel Earl's order and so to evite all misunderstanding either in the man or in the worke or the forme thereof.'

Similarly Charles II criticized and altered the plans of Holyrood — wanting a cellar instead of a chapel, less royal apartments, an extra staircase, disliking a privy gallery, and so on.

Until 1700 (setting aside corporations) patronage was largely noble and gentle: in the eighteenth century, though there is also an unprecedented growth of large country houses, particularly in the east of England as a result of agricultural prosperity, middle-class patrons multiply. There is an element of wealthy bankers, doctors and lawyers;<sup>1</sup> there are also banks themselves to be built, and (offshoot of Howard's reforms) penitentiaries.<sup>2</sup> There was a decline in all forms of patronage during the American and French wars, and when things recovered wealth had passed into the hands of patrons more uneducated and less in touch with tradition than ever before. The life of Soane,<sup>3</sup> one of the more able architects who survived the difficult period, shows how serious this slump was, coming as it did at a point where the architect was becoming conscious of himself as a professional man. Soane returned from Rome and began his work in 1780, when the country was very disturbed; there were the Gordon Riots, and North's 1780-82 Ministry was obviously unstable. His design for the House of Lords had to be shelved. The American war of 1773-82, the revolutionary wars of 1792-1815, and the various financial and commercial troubles of 1797, 1810 and 1825-26 were all fatal to architecture. By the time anything like prosperity had returned, Soane was due to retire, and the eighteenth-century style had irrevocably passed away.

The dividing date in the history of the architect, as in so many other matters, has often been set at 1760, but it is impossible to be so definite. Certainly a stage of development is reached when architects begin to make of their art a mystery of fixed rules, and of themselves a close and learned corporation. This, like the literary fashions of the Kent period which succeeded, had a deleterious effect on the art of building because of the loss of tradition, though it may have helped to make architecture a profession. By 1760 sons were commonly following in their fathers' footsteps as architects: this contributed to professional stability; and Soane was able to envy the many architectural dynasties in London, such as the Wyatt, Hardwicke, Smirke and Cockerell families.

True association, however could only occur when architects separated themselves from the business of contracting and from speculative building. In early days the owner often provided all

<sup>1</sup> For example: Robert Mylne erected a substantial house in Stratton Street, Piccadilly, for Mr Coutts 'the banker in the Strand' and a house for Dr Hunter in Lichfield Street. Adam built Osterly for Robert Child the banker and Brasted, near Sevenoaks, for Dr Turton, the royal physician, when he retired in 1784. Middle-class demand also led to the laying-out of many of the London squares and their surrounding streets.

<sup>2</sup> Soane competed with designs for two of these, failed, and gave up competing.

<sup>3</sup> A. T. BOLTON: *Life and Letters of Sir John Soane; Life and Work a Century Ago*; *Architectural Education a Century Ago*.

materials, but the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries are full of money squabbles arising from the confusion of payments to architects for work, materials and contracting. A much more serious matter was that of speculative building. It was common in the seventeenth century for architects to build and let or sell houses, witness Robert Mylne (b.1633) who built some tenements 'for his own use and benefit' upon the shore of Leith, as well as Mylne's Square, a great improvement on the crowded wynds. But the period in which real speculation occurred is that from about the mid-eighteenth century to the end of the Regency, with Adam and Nash at the peak. It was a short step from laying out the property of one's employers to seeing the opportunities for speculative building. John Wood of Bath, the brothers Adam, and Nash (in his better moments), show what could be done in the way of gracious building on a speculative basis. Wood, who was only 21 when he started speculative building, was probably offered financial assistance by Ralph Allen. Even 'the princely Chandos' employed Wood to build a court of houses, retaining a portion for his own occupation and letting the remainder as lodging and apartments — a new kind of ducal patron with a business eye. The Adam brothers were typical of a half-century notorious for speculation and gambling, when to buy houses on speculation seems to have been quite an amusement for the nobility.<sup>1</sup> The brothers were once in so great financial difficulties that they had to resort to a lottery to extricate themselves. When Nash left the office of Robert Taylor, where he studied architecture, he set up not as an architect but as a speculative builder — since his ambitions were not merely for architecture, but also for engineering, finance and big undertakings. After a bankruptcy in 1783 he went to Wales, where in partnership with a builder called Saxon he seems thoroughly to have learnt the building racket. John Summerson in his life of John Nash gives detailed accounts of the speculations in connection with Regents' Park, the canal and the Street, and of his complicated methods of paying for Buckingham House (later Palace). In fact, Nash was to be practically the last of his kind, at least on a grand scale. He lived into an age of middle-class economy and reform, and the 1828 committee of investigation was not so much worried about his ability or integrity as about the loose and unsatisfactory control of public money. The 1829 committee entered a rider to the effect that

<sup>1</sup> Bolton (pp. 112-3) says that it is idle to speculate whether Bute or Mansfield were promoters in some of the major schemes (e.g. the Adelphi) for 'gossip and violent charges . . . were the rule'. Mansfield is said to have obtained £30,000 p.a. from mortgages, and the reference to his connection with the Adelphi is in CRADDOCK's *Memoirs*, p. 97 (1828): 'His Lordship was not at first more fortunate in encouraging the building of the Adelphi.'

it would be as well if official architects were prevented from interesting themselves in property for which they might be called upon to give a valuation.

This was the beginning of the end. The *Annual Register* for 1835 (p. 221) wrote of Nash unkindly, and, as posterity sees it, too harshly:

As a speculative builder, this gentleman amassed a large fortune; but as an Architect, he did not achieve anything that will confer upon him lasting reputation.

In this as in so many other ways, as Mr Summerson says, 'Nash embodied everything which the nineteenth century hated about the eighteenth'.

## USE AND MEANING

ERNEST GELLNER

THERE is a tendency among some modern philosophers, mainly among those influenced, I suppose, by some of the views of Professors G. E. Moore and L. Wittgenstein, to appeal to the *use* of expressions in philosophic arguments. As this relevance of use tends to be an implicit rule of procedure rather than an explicit doctrine, it is difficult to pin it down for purposes of examining its validity. I should formulate it as the doctrine that the meaning of an expression *is* the manner in which it is used, or, less strongly, that the latter is at least a necessary criterion of meaning, i.e. that an expression cannot be said to mean something which would entail that the use of that expression is mistaken. I shall not distinguish between the weak and the strong formulations as the distinction makes no difference to my argument. I am thinking of slogans such as the one attributed to Professor Wittgenstein, 'don't ask for the meaning, ask for the use'.

I shall argue that the unqualified appeal to use has three serious demerits:

(1) It makes many traditional philosophic questions look nonsensical or silly by making the answers to them trivial; of course we use expressions such as 'see you later', 'I am sure', 'this is immoral', etc., and, *in that sense*, time is indeed real, we do indeed have certainty, there *are* ethical characteristics, etc. etc.

(2) The doctrine is profoundly misleading with regard to the nature of language, involving the 'Fido' — Fido Fallacy, to use an expression of Professor Ryle's — the assimilation of unsuitable expressions to names and a misplaced expectation of 'objective correlates' where there are none.

(3) Owing to certain general features of the use of language the appeal to it for purposes of deciding questions of meaning is self-contradictory, rather like a command ordering two incompatible performances.

Demerit (1) is of course sometimes taken to be a merit; but if I succeed in establishing charges (2) and (3) it too perhaps will be seen to constitute a weakness.

Of course, 'meaning' is an over-laden word, and we can if we wish sharpen its definition to make it mean something like 'the range of permissible uses of an expression' (or the rule determining that range) and then, 'to ask for the meaning is to ask for the use', can be translated into 'to ask for the use is to ask for the use'. But I take it that

the people who make the above recommendation are not basing it on this trivial tautology. What they are presumably saying is something resembling some of the following propositions: 'to ask for the use is the *only* possible way of asking for the meaning', or 'to ask for the use is the *most important* way of etc.', or 'by asking for the use we shall get more illumination about how a language works than by any other way'. In these senses the doctrine becomes non-tautologous, interesting and disputable. But there is another way of making the doctrine indisputable but trivial; that is, instead of sharpening the definition of 'meaning' to play about with the word 'used'. If *anything* said about an expression in attempts to find its meaning will count as saying something about how it is used, then of course . . . Instead of sharpening 'meaning' we can loosen 'use'; but I wish to limit the meaning of 'showing the use' to 'the describing of situations in which the expression is in fact used'. The 'tea-tasting' method is perhaps a good example; but the general criterion of 'use-showing' will be the making of usage-situations the final arbiter, of it being made senseless to say 'this is how the expression is used but it is wrongly used so'.

If use guarantees the meaningfulness of an expression analytically, i.e. if to say that an expression has meaning is to say no more than that it is in use, the point is not very exciting. One suspects, however, that the doctrine succeeds in combining plausibility with fertility in application by means of fluctuating between a synthetic and an analytic interpretation, in which respect it perhaps is not unique among philosophic doctrines. I suspect that the doctrine also gains something from the ambiguity of the word 'use', which can mean merely 'is frequently uttered', or, more strongly, 'performs some function'.

The crux is the belief in the infallibility, on the subject of meaning, of usage; *whose* usage being made clear from the context and the proviso being added that a unique answer can only be expected if usage is homogeneous and does not change. *My case against usage is not based simply on the fact that the conditions specified in the proviso frequently do not hold.*

I think the kind of situation by which the usage-idolators tend to be misled is something like this: imagine a society (in fact there have been such) in which people have names rather in the way in which we do, but in which there are no identity-cards, public or police-records, birth-registries, etc. To say in such a society 'Everyone always calls him Tommy, but that is not his real name' would be a silly, or at best a mystical pronouncement. He who is called Tommy *is* Tommy; that's what being Tommy means; and someone who denies that Tommy is Tommy is either making a mistake or agitating for the renaming of Tommy — which, seeing Tommy has a perfectly good



name, is a wasteful procedure. This is like the account sometimes given of philosophers who complain that we never have certainty, or that we never know about what goes on 'inside' other people, etc.; for it is said that the kind of conditions under which in fact, we start being certain that Tommy won't pass the exam, or that he has a tooth-ache, are in a way what is meant by 'certainty', or by 'Tommy's tooth-ache'. Is he who denies it unacquainted with usage, or is he perversely trying to reform it, not realizing that the word he is trying to abolish is performing a useful function and that we shall have to invent another one to replace it if we abolish it?

Of course, it was noticed that philosophers maintaining odd usage-contrary theses were not merely making mistakes or agitating for reshuffling of meanings, but were doing something more; they were 'bringing out similarities' etc. In other words, the point of 'Tommy is not really Tommy' was roughly, 'Tommy is, in some ways, so much like Richard that we might have called *him* Richard'. I don't think either the 'mistake' or the 'similarity' account will do; the latter because it is too vague. Being so vague, it might of course be said to be a good figurative summary of whatever the true account is; but, alas, one cannot see the full true account from the summary.

If we revert from the possible society outlined above to the one we actually live in, we find that 'Tommy is not really Tommy' need be neither a mistake nor a suggestion for reform, but may be a very informative statement based on the discovery that Tommy's birth certificate says 'Theodosius', a fact that he has so far managed to keep secret. The point of this is that there are criteria for what a person's name is which are other than that of finding out what he is actually called; *and our linguistic behaviour is frequently such that when the various criteria conflict, the usage criterion, the answer to the question 'what do we in fact ordinarily call him?' is over-ridden by the other criteria.*

I shall write 'TOMMY', thus, in capitals, as an abbreviation for 'That which/who is in fact *called* Tommy', and similarly for any other expression. The mistake which usage-stressing philosophers make or at any rate are liable to cause their readers to make, is that 'X is x' is always true, presumably analytically so, and that 'X isn't really x' is silly and presumably contradictory.

Of course, if deference to definitions *as against usage* can be explained away in terms of (a) a *change* of language, analogous to a renaming of Tommy, or (b) perversion of language by magical or philosophical theories of words as labels tied to things independently of any natural language, then it will not bear out my point. If, however, it can most plausibly be described as a *correction*, by means of a criterion already somehow implicitly present, then it will. It is not just that use changes, but that use (range of situations in which

an expression is deemed applicable) changes *owing* to the (already present) meaning of the expression in some *other* sense of meaning.

This is a possibly subtle but nevertheless crucial point. Of course the stressers of usage admit that usages change; but the question is, how or why they change. The changes which can be described as changes *of* the language concerned, or of its rules, do not undermine usage-based philosophy. But if changes in usage occur (this is my contention) in virtue of rules of meaning implicitly already present, rules over-riding 'usage' in the sense of 'range of situations in which expression is used', then usage is *not* a good clue to meaning.

To illustrate this point: consider the expression, 'The fifth house in our street'. A man may, owing to a miscalculation and subsequent inattention, use this expression for years when discussing what is, in fact, the *sixth* house. Despite very frequent use of this expression when mentioning the house, the expression does *not* become a name but remains a description, because, when one day the initial mistake is pointed out, the man withdraws the description as a means of referring to *that* house. Yet he had used the expression practically as a name for the house for years. If we had 'observed the situations in which he used the expression', we would have falsely concluded that the expression was the name of the house, i.e. that in his language it remains attached to the house whatever further discoveries were made about the house.

Usage-talk suggests that expressions have meanings merely in the sense of being attached to ranges of use-situations; and that understanding the meaning is to know the range, or the rules of its construction, *which rules can be inferred from the range*. But this holds *only for names* — not for descriptions, for a description can be misapplied whereas, in a sense, *a name cannot*. Usage-talk 'solves' philosophic problems by treating worrying expressions as kinds of names.

Consider, as an analogy, the possible use in natural or social sciences of expressions such as 'x does/do not exist', substituting for x expressions such as 'positrons', 'genes' or 'the Feudal System'. Such expressions are not perverse denials of the facts which had previously been interpreted with the help of these terms but indicate that a new theory covering those facts is being advocated, which new theory may, but need not, have been occasioned by the discovery of new facts. What I am suggesting is that common language resembles in some ways scientific systems; and philosophic attempts at its reform resembles those reforms. Expressions of ordinary language, especially philosophically interesting ones, *embody theories*, whereas the usage-philosophers think, or at any rate unintentionally or otherwise convey the impression, that these expressions merely attach to classes of situations, rather as 'Tommy' attaches to Tommy in our

simplified society. (This is charge (2) ) They seem to be saying (or recommending) that many expressions, especially very generally used ones which lead to philosophic worries, such as verbs of cognition or ethical adjectives, function more like names than like descriptions (or should do). I know that they do not misinterpret them as names in the sense in which it leads to paradoxes concerning hypothetical false or negative propositions; but this is another sense, concerned with the permissibility or otherwise of saying with an expression 'x' which has an accepted use, that 'x does not really exist'. Substitute 'Tommy' for x in this expression in the imaginary simple society, and you get a silly or impermissible statement. Make the same substitution in our actual society, and you get an important synthetic proposition, and *not* a 'philosophic paradox'. In our language, 'TOMMY is Tommy' and 'TOMMY isn't really Tommy' are both synthetic.

The reason for this is that the *correct* use of the word 'Tommy' or of the philosophically worrying expressions, has a number of criteria, of which the *actual* use is only one; the 'theory embodied' in the word, to explain the metaphor occurring in the preceding paragraph, is that these criteria do not conflict, i.e. that the classes defined by them coalesce. Hence the importance of philosophical discoveries of the form 'x is not really x' or 'x does not really exist', the discoveries being that *these classes do not in fact coalesce*, the reason in the latter case being the extreme one that *one* of the classes has no members.

These two possibilities are characteristic of many cases of a philosophic doubt or worry. To stress usage is useful *in the beginning* as a means of showing *that* all this has occurred, but it certainly is not enough. What can sensibly count as a solution or 'resolution' is the description of the usage and the specification of the usage-conflicting criterion, plus a statement of their relative advantages; plus a sketch-history of the criterion — i.e. an explanation of why it should suddenly begin to appeal so forcefully and whether, as I think is often the case, it was in some way implicitly or even overtly present for some time; plus a statement of why its incompatibility with usage had not been noticed before.

It is not possible within the space of this article to attempt to deal with the question of how these usage-contrary criteria arose, of how philosophers and others come to discover or invent them. It would probably require a historical study of both successful and unsuccessful innovations inspired by philosophic theories. I suspect it has something to do with the fact that terms in a language are systematically connected, and that occasionally in cases when the usage-range of a term conflicts with its having a neat place in the system it is preferable to abandon usage rather than remodel the system. A general, provisional and tentative answer can perhaps be given; it is

that what happens is similar to some of those cases in science, or in the formulation of hypotheses by a detective in a crime novel, in which one theory replaces another but not as the result of any new evidence. It may also be that sometimes the promulgation and acceptance of a new usage-contrary criterion may be due to its 'enriching' language in the sense of enabling one to make distinctions where previously there had been none. But I do not for a moment pretend that I can give an answer to this important question; I am suggesting that it should be asked more often and that usage-talk makes against this.

The main fact leading to these considerations is the extremely *philosophic* linguistic behaviour of the 'ordinary man'; of all of us, in fact, except those under the influence of doubly-sophisticated philosophic theories. The mere fact that philosophy, in the sense of usage-contrary propositions not occasioned by empirical evidence exists, establishes this. If one, for instance, points out to an 'ordinary man' that 'knowledge' implies certainty and that this he seldom or never has, he will, in most cases, begin with an attempt to attack the arguments showing the absence of certainty in a strong sense. But if he comes to see that this cannot be done, he will not fall back on saying that an analysis entailing that he seldom, if ever, has knowledge must be false because the verb 'to know' is frequently affirmatively used; more probably he will admit that he does not 'really know' and attach the apologetic label '*not real knowledge*' to what he ordinarily claims to know, though of course he will not go on doing this for long owing to its cumbersomeness and will soon forget all about it. The trouble with *this* reform may be that it affects too generally a used word, but a history of language might show successful reforms affecting even words of similar generality. On the positive as opposed to the 'abolishing' side, Professor Price introducing a symposium at Bangor at the Joint Session of Mind Association and Aristotelian Society, 1949, gave an impressive list of very general words in common usage originating in philosophy.

The deference shown by some modern philosophers to actual usage has had, I think, various harmful effects. It has made it difficult to see why earlier philosophers have talked of 'concepts' in a sense *not* equivalent to rules of the actual use of a term; we should do well to be interested in 'concepts' in such a sense, and we need not fear that we shall thereby be committing ourselves to 'hypostatized entities'. Moreover, it is liable to divert attention from what might be called the internal dynamics of language, i.e. the reasons and manner of linguistic changes *other than* those caused by extra-linguistic factors such as accretion of empirical knowledge, arbitrary fashions, etc., i.e. to those as it were internal to language, due to interplay of *already existing* criteria. And not only does it

give us a static view of language; it also acts, in philosophy, as a kind of linguistic conservatism, an apotheosis of the *status quo*.

But worse still. If I am right in saying that we behave philosophically, i.e. that in cases of conflict we frequently prefer a non-usage criterion to the actual-usage one, then the recommendation that we should observe ordinary use ('observe' both in the sense of 'obey' and 'note') becomes impossible to comply with — impossible because self-contradictory, through excessive generality. (This is charge (3)). It may be that in a sense the old philosophers perverted language when they came out with things like 'time is not real' or 'there is no such thing as beauty', but the usage-respectors pervert it at a second and as much or as little pernicious level. (Perhaps this paper is language-perversion at a third level, as usage-stressing did in its time have its points; the preceding remark at the fourth, and so on.) But for language, one could say, perversion is second nature. Another way of making this point would be to say that philosophy must account for philosophic talk, which is essentially previous-usage-independent, simply because such talk is so widespread and important in language. To talk philosophy is to use language — and it is a widespread kind of use, extending far beyond academic philosophy.

There are amusing historical parallels to the above self-contradictory recommendation. Such self-contradictoriness springs from making some source of pronouncements necessarily correct. Thus the seventeenth-century French Jansenists maintained the superior authority, for them, of the Pope as opposed to the French king and the Gallican Church. In the end they were told by the Pope to subordinate themselves to the latter. *Whatever* they did after that they were bound to violate their own tenets. The situation would be even worse nowadays, since the doctrine of the Infallibility of the Pope. What would happen if some Pope declared *ex cathedra* that doctrine to be false? The original doctrine did not contain a proviso that only first-order pronouncements were infallible.

A similar predicament befell the American Communist Party during the late war when its then leader, Earl Browder, advised its members amongst other things, to 'embrace Capitalism'. Members of Communist parties do not embrace capitalism but fight it; that is why they are members; but they also, from that very motive, loyally abide by Party decisions once these are made. The situation here might become even more desperate if one day some Party Congress decided that the Party would henceforth no longer be monolithic but will demand open disagreement. *Whatever* one did then one would be deviating.

The recommendation to honour and obey usage generates a similar paradox if use is indeed philosophical in the manner sug-



gested. Use has played the trick of lending its own authority to the denial of that authority, so to speak. To talk of use unperverted by philosophy is like talking of the Noble Savage (with which myth 'common usage' has indeed much in common); one cannot find it, and if this paper is correct then this is more like a logical than an empirical 'cannot'.

Another way of making this point is this: 'use' in 'use of an expression' is ambiguous, meaning either 'range of actual use' or, alternatively, 'rule of correct use'. Stressers of usage tend either to ignore this ambiguity, or dogmatically to treat the latter sense as derivative from the former. *But just in this they have gone counter to the manner in which we really use language*; our actual use of language entails, I am arguing, the separation of these two senses, and an occasional subordination of the former to the latter. We *use* language (in a general sense) in a way which disregards the way we 'use' language (in the range-of-use-situations sense).

The fallacy behind usage-talk is, I think, an extensional theory of language. I am not saying that language works intensionally, but that in fact some expressions function one way and some the other; and that consequently with regard to any one expression extensional functioning cannot justifiably be assumed but must be established. By 'extensional' and 'intensional' I here mean this: an expression functions extensionally if we know the class of situations in which it is applicable, and can only derive inductively the criterion (or 'analysis') by finding what features, if any, those situations have in common without sharing them with any other situations. An expression functions intensionally, if, consciously or implicitly, we operate with a criterion from which the applicable situation or situations are derived. (Compare the above case of 'the sixth house'.) Language derives its usefulness from the fact that it contains expressions functioning both ways, and not, as the usage theory of meaning suggests, only extensional expressions.

One line of defence is left to the usage-defender. He may admit that language contains expressions of both kinds, but claim that those very generally relevant expressions which are focal to philosophical problems are all extensional. This point is sometimes made in the following form: 'Suppose we admitted the weight of a sceptic's case against knowledge, other minds, etc. etc.; would we not then have to invent new words to do the job which the undermined ones had performed before?' The fact that we should answer this question in the affirmative is held to show that the words in question are tied to the kind of situation in which they are used and that analysis entailing that they are wrongly used is *ex hypothesi* mistaken; that, for instance, 'introspecting others' cannot be the meaning of, 'know-



ing what others think', seeing we never do the former but often speak of doing the latter.

The answer to this is that we do not in fact always answer the above question affirmatively. One well-established counter-example is sufficient to refute a generalization, and I propose to produce one. The existence of God is traditionally a philosophic question; yet the atheist is clearly not denying that religious assertions are used by believers in Church Services, prayer, consolation etc.; what he is denying is that they are truly or validly used. To interpret propositions asserting or denying the existence of God in terms of the ascertainable 'use' of these propositions is to commit a ludicrous travesty of them and to fly in the face of common sense for the sake of the usage theory. It has, however, been attempted.

Of course, in talking of usage-worshippers I may have been putting up a straw man. Perhaps nobody *quite* meant to generalize the theory, perhaps nobody *quite* fits the description.

## BOOK REVIEWS

K. HAZAREESINGH: *A History of Indians in Mauritius. General Printing and Stationery Co., Mauritius.*

The history of emigration from India to other parts of the British Commonwealth, when it is written, will be an intensely interesting study of local variations on a central theme — the original response, not without pressure, to the demand for labour to take the place of freed slaves; intervention by the Indian Government on behalf of the Indians, increasingly effective with the extension of Indian representation; the gradual emergence, after the restrictions of the indenture system were removed, of an Indian middle class of traders and landowners; the crystallization of communal feeling as constitutional advances proceed.

Mr. Hazareesingh contributes the story from Mauritius. A large part of his book is devoted to the development of the indenture system. In it we meet another of the basic themes of colonial history — the conflict of the needs (as seen by themselves) of colonial producers in difficulties and the policies laid down by Downing Street on grounds of humanitarian principle; Governors finding a balance between the two at different points according to their personal views; demands for self-government seen as emancipation from remote control; protests on behalf of the labourers by isolated members of the local upper class, indignantly discounted by the rest but leading to inquiry on behalf of the Secretary of State and measures for reform; concerted movements of protest by labour, leading to the creation of Labour Departments and the recognition of collective bargaining. It was largely the labour troubles in Mauritius, together with those of the same years in the West Indies, that led to the adoption at the time of the Colonial Development and Welfare Act of 1940 of the policy of recognition and encouragement for colonial trade unions.

We note the contrast between the time of the Royal Commission of 1872, appointed on account of allegations in a petition by a Frenchman, and that of the Swettenham Commission of 1909, when the immigrants' case was presented by an Indian. The story of the indenture system comes to an end with the final and effective protest by Indians in India in 1921. The sugar estate troubles of 1937 are also described in detail.

Mr Hazareesingh gives a short but interesting description of contemporary life in the Indian labouring class, and touches on the communal problem in politics; in his view this need not present serious difficulties for Mauritius. His references to political events would be easier to follow if he had indicated the type of constitution in force at different times.

L. P. MAIR

T. R. HENN: *The Lonely Tower. Studies in the Poetry of W. B. Yeats. Methuen, 21s. net.*

This is the sixth book on the mind and art of Yeats to appear since the end of the war. Some, like those by Dr Jeffares and Mr Ellmann, have used the biography to achieve a pattern; others, like Mr Stauffer's *The Golden Nightingale*, simply examine the poetry. The M.L.A.'s 'Work in Progress' promises many more books and essays; there have already been distinguished contributions of the latter kind by critics predominantly American, some of whom are represented in the useful collection called *The Permanence of Yeats*. Those who are at all concerned with discussing modern poetry with undergraduates may have cause to report that Yeats does not seem to be very widely or enthusiastically read; for this, not the abundance of exegetes but the shortage of texts — a shortage relieved, not

overcome, by the recent reprint of *Collected Poems*—may be partly responsible. A new commentary, then, has to justify itself in the light of what has gone before. What does Mr Henn's book give us that is not to be found elsewhere?

First, there is an excellent chapter on Yeats' Western Irish background, written with a fine and personal feeling:

The truth about the great houses of the South and West lies, perhaps, somewhere between Yeats' pictures of Coole Park, the romantic descriptions of some recent novelists, and MacNeice's 'snob idyllicism' . . . An eighteenth-century house might be half-filled with Sheraton and Adam work, and half with Victorian rubbish. Families nursed the thought of past greatness, fed their vanity with old achievement or lineage or imagined descent from the ancient kings; and in the warm damp air, with its perpetual sense of melancholy, of unhappy things either far off or present, many of them decayed. . . .

Secondly, in a chapter called 'A Vision and the Interpretation of History', Mr Henn expounds Yeats' Sacred Book more helpfully than any other writer and emphasizes the importance to the poet of its 'justification after its composition':

It is essential . . . to watch the emotion receiving sanction, as it were, so that images are reborn, not as refractions of second-hand opinions, but in a state of intense excitement arising from the central certainty that his previous intuition had been just, even to the smallest detail.

Thirdly, Mr Henn makes some really seminal suggestions about Yeats and painting: he identifies the altar-piece of 'Michael Robartes and the Dancer' (*Collected Poems*, 1950, p. 197), brings many of Yeats' own references to paintings to bear on images in the poems, and makes a brilliant find in relating 'News for the Delphic Oracle' (*ibid.*, p. 376) to Poussin's 'The Marriage of Peleus and Thetis'. Mr Henn adds, for he likes to test and stretch his particularities:

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We are helped [by observing the relationships between the poems and painting] to perceive the unifying principles of Yeats's use of symbols. Their apparent arbitrariness and confusion vanishes, and they can be seen as clearly related to his six great periods of human myth and history and thought.

This sufficiently demonstrates both the wide range and the devotion to detail which characterize *The Lonely Tower*. And apart from these specific contributions to exegesis, the book is continually illuminated by the author's knowledge of the material that went to feed Yeats' mind. Again and again he enables us to perceive meanings more exactly by relating a line, an image or a stanza to a parallel in the prose works or to a phrase from Plato, Dante, Berkeley and many other writers, famous or obscure, in 'the Great Caliph's library'. It is true that Mr Henn nowhere gives us a complete answer to a question that might be framed, after a current fashion, as 'What was the influence on Yeats of Schopenhauer or Plotinus or Morris or J. B. Yeats?' But it is by no means certain that this is the right kind of question to ask about Yeats, although by selecting a single poem and carefully limiting her field, Miss Marion Witt has, like others before her, succeeded in showing more recently how one at least of Yeats' debts (to the aesthetic of Palmer and Calvert) can be described and circumscribed with admirable precision ('The Making of an Elegy: Yeats' "In Memory of Major Robert Gregory"', *Modern Philology*, xlviii, 1950). The advantage of a study like Miss Witt's is that it leaves us with a feeling that an answer has been found, rather than that a hare has been started. Mr Henn sometimes whirls his kaleidoscope with too much of a showman's expertise, and there are grounds for wishing, as some of his images flash past, that the pace were slower and the referents a little less various. With engaging modesty, he offers a list for future researchers of what he has left undone (p. xvi); but even in handling sources there must be an order of merit. By any measurement it seems likely that, for Yeats, Swift, for example, is more important than Dorothy Wellesley, and McTaggart less central than Berkeley. And since Mr Henn is much concerned with Yeats' borrowings and their issue in poetic achievement, his study might have seemed more solid and less restless if he had tried to establish a just relation between the opportunist theft, the happy coincidence, 'imitation' and the long-standing debt. What, for instance, of Vico, that formidable mind? Did Yeats read the *Nuova Scienza* in the original? or rely on Flint and Croce and Pound? or draw in from the air he breathed — the predominantly Viconian air of our time — the doctrine that floods *A Vision* and the subsequent poems? And what are the depths and vigour of that flood, as compared with other streams of influence? Questions which are not, one hopes, beyond all conjecture, though they demand, to be answered, a thoroughness and a delimitation which Mr Henn avoids.

Perhaps he was right to do so, and certainly he has consciously chosen his method. Yeats' work reveals, in Mr Henn's words, a 'complex laminated structure', a 'stained and skeined variety'; with these he busies himself. Thus, in spite of his wider sweeps in such chapters as 'Women Young and Old' or 'The Masks', it is for the commentary on single lines or poems, or even words (like the brilliant treatment of 'horseman' in the final chapter) that *The Lonely Tower* is most valuable. One would not, however, willingly forego watching Mr Henn re-organize even familiar material, such as that in the chapters named, into his personal structures. There are, perhaps, too many of these reconnaissances in the earlier part of the work. There is nothing very valuable or new in 'Yeats and Synge', in 'The Study of Hatred' or 'The Development of Style', and these and some other sections could have been omitted. The book is, indeed, longer than it needed to be, and its purposes in some ways at war with each other: the syncretism occasionally quarrels with the card-index, although Mr Henn usually succeeds in

making them contribute to one another's vitality. Ideally, the place for some of his exegesis would be an edition of the poems, and for some of his syntheses a work more tightly bound to a single central theme. Yet none of these criticisms, which reflect on method rather than achievement, can detract from the very real importance of his many discoveries, his vigorous refusal to be baffled by difficulties and his enthusiasm for Yeats the man and poet.

Mr Henn's work does not radically change what has become, since *Last Poems and Plays*, the accepted critical picture of Yeats, though it is good to see him insisting on the greatness of that last volume. The familiar emphases emerge enriched but unaltered — the search for a mythology, the importance of the Anglo-Irish strain, the late maturity, the poetic and personal needs satisfied and made potent by an esoteric system, the anti-self, the dream of a society Byzantine in its purity and force, the watching for spirits. Like others before him, Mr Henn directs his attention mainly to the later poems, says little of the plays, and less of the prose save as it explains the verse. Posterity seems likely to agree. Yet books still remain to be written which will deal more exhaustively with Yeats' sources, will establish the abounding continuities between the early and late Yeats, and will tackle the wider question of what Yeats' poetry really gives us, in addition to views of an exciting hinterland and the inspiring sight of a man making his soul — 'a kind of moral as well as intellectual excellence', as Mr Eliot has said. The screen of commentary — for Yeats is excellently adapted to present modes of scholarly investigation — has tended to conceal the possibility that Yeats may be in one trough, and about to plunge into a deeper. If it be true that the intelligent young no longer read him, there is something wrong somewhere, though not necessarily with Yeats.

Mr Henn has a word to say on these issues in his final chapter, on the charges

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of insincerity, political errors and obscurity; and, in a sense, his whole book, like those of his predecessors, is a vindication by minute particulars of the Yeatsian *method*. Yet this defence hardly touches the central problem, the 'detraction . . . that Yeats' poetry is out of touch with the world about him; that though he has wisdom, he has no unifying moral subject; that he has no philosophy of life, but in its place a mythology which is personal, obscure, insistent and remote'. Mr Henn sketches in an answer: that it is the task of such a poet not to mirror certainty, but to lead us with him through speculations and persuade us to awareness of much that is on the edge of thought and emotion. But the last barrier between Yeats and his readers is not so much what is here described as their inability to share his own feeling that 'love and war and death are fundamentally a mystery' as the sense that Yeats is always seeking, whether in the mire or the zodiac, for 'something other than human life'. There is that desire to 'empty' his theatre by excluding character for the sake of 'that beauty which seems unearthly', to seek the plummet-measured face, to bear the blaze of that fifteenth perfect night where, characteristically, 'there is no human life', to escape into the artifact or plunge into 'the rich, dark nothing': such quests yield all the pleasures of excitement and fright. But, after all, the object of the Quest is, traditionally, to bring back life to the land, to heal the wounded king or break the featureless enchantments of sleep. That is a mystery, too. Yeats wrote in a play which parables this dilemma:

He that has loved the best  
May turn from a statue  
His too human breast.

PETER URE

C. A. COOKE: *Corporation, Trust and Company*. Manchester University Press, 15s. net.

This is 'an Essay in Legal History' designed to investigate 'the mingling of legal ideas and economic purposes' in the history of English business life, from the beginnings of 'commercial corporate life' in the twelfth century to the first modern Companies Acts of 1844-62. That it should have been attempted at all deserves applause, for it knocks at the door of both judicial ignorance and the conventional segregation of studies. And that it pursues its difficult enterprise so successfully is a tribute to Dr Cooke's learning and lucidity. It unfolds a fascinating story. Agreeably written — Dr Cooke is a regular contributor to the *Manchester Guardian* — yet it marshals the facts soberly and explores their significance arriving at clearly stated hypotheses. Indeed, if anything, it is a little too disciplined, keeping its limited objectives steadily in view and discarding material which a more diffuse writer would have been unable to resist. The result is a book in which the reader is never in any doubt about where he is being led, but which always suggests more than is actually explored.

The author, like anyone who pursues this theme, is a follower of Maitland, especially the Maitland of the 1904 essay, *Trust and Corporation*. But thoroughly as he appears to understand Trust, he has perhaps done less than justice to its contribution to Corporation. The 1904 essay has, *pretium succedit in locum rei et res succedit in locum pretii*; and the trust fund retains its identity as a 'thing' capable of being invested in different ways. In this essay and elsewhere Maitland implies, in a way this book seems to neglect, that the trust, long before it suffered adaptation to the purposes of the business company, had the essence of corporate form in its own right. In pointing out this adaptation Dr Cooke maintains (p. 72) that a trust instrument sets out the beneficiaries and they are permanently determined, whereas in the corporation the beneficiaries — the shareholders — are fluid. Too much can be made of this. Trust



beneficiaries can and do transfer their equitable interests. There is an active market in reversions. And on the other hand investment in a business venture can be 'permanent', and as a regular practice, jobbing in and out of shareholdings, one would have thought, has no longer history than the transference of interests in private trusts.

The book explores the confluence of the social discoveries of the universities, societies, boroughs, guilds and partnership ventures of Englishmen, and in the process makes its own discoveries. At least one reader has found the thoughts on the retarding influence of the lack of a double-entry book-keeping system, and the connection between risk-taking investment and the usury laws, of the greatest interest. There is no theorizing about corporate form, but it is perhaps doubtful whether Dr Cooke's views about the complete adoption by English law of the conception of corporate personality would be approved by all jurists. Nor do these views seem entirely consistent with the proper emphasis given to the delay caused by modern company legislation in the persistence of the idea that the joint-stock company (and I would add, even the chartered company) was essentially a partnership.

The general conclusion of the book is that corporate form came to clothe not a group but a capital fund. But whether this is quite adequate to cover the different relationships (within the company) of directors and mere shareholders, is debatable. And it has always seemed somewhat incongruous that a man who as employé gives a lifetime of devoted service to a company, is never legally 'a member' of it, but that what Dr Cooke calls 'a sort of goodwill in the corporate personality' can be carelessly acquired by a purchase of shares and be as lightly lost a week later by their sale.

On these and numerous other points many readers will want to reflect, and



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perhaps argue. That they will wish to do so is a measure of the author's success. And for the general reader the lesson that 'the political reform (and one might add, "use") of institutions is liable to take strange courses if it is unrelated to the development of those institutions', will not be lost. Corporations were inextricably involved in royal grants of monopolies and the public purposes of government before they were adapted to private profit. The National Coal Board reverts to type, and the critics of its constitution would be enlightened by what Dr Cooke has to say. In short, the book is an exceedingly valuable addition to our social studies.

There are a few, not very important, misprints; and on page 179 I would suggest 'debentures' for 'shares'. And what is to be inferred from the fact that 'up to the present' refers to the Companies Act of 1929, when later Acts (1947 and 1948) precede the date of publication?

D. R. MARSH

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